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Nick Carter Stories

THE MAN THEY HELD BACK

-OR-

Nick Carter's Other Self

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE MAN THEY HELD BACK;

Or, NICK CARTER'S OTHER SELF.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A MAN IN A MASK.

"You'll pass for a Mexican in those togs, chief."

"The 'togs,' as you call them, Chick, don't necessarily make any character. But there is nothing about a Mexican to distinguish him from other men except his costume, so I dare say I shall be a good-enough Mexican for the purpose."

Nick Carter, the famous detective, regarded his reflection in the mirror rather disgustedly, and his speech came in angry jerks, unlike his usual calm, even tones.

"You'll be masked, of course?" observed his assistant, Chickering.

"Certainly. It is a masked ball. If it were not, I should have very little chance of catching my men. They would know me at once."

"I hope they will be there."

"They will, in all probability—unless they suspect that I may be on the lookout for them. But I wish the costumer hadn't made this mistake about my dress. I told him distinctly I wanted the uniform of a Spanish officer—a colonel, if he had it. Evidently he considered this rig—with the trousers split at the bottoms, and this big sombrero—was near enough, when he found he had not just what I ordered."

"Pity we hadn't got the costumes in our own wardrobe."

"Yes. We have all kinds of disguises," returned Nick. "But we seem to have overlooked both a Spanish officer and a Mexican of this particular type. I could have gone as a vaquero without bothering anybody outside. But I have been seen in that dress, and this gang of counterfeiters we are after are as cunning as any set of men I have ever met. They'd smell me out, as a vaquero, as soon as I went into the ballroom."

"I'd like to be going with you," said Chick, with a shade of envy in his voice. "Those big balls at the Hotel Supremacy are always worth seeing. I dare say I could have got an invitation."

"I am going on business, Chick," returned his chief coldly.

"I know that. Still, some business is pleasanter than others," persisted Chick. "You are going to do the tango, I suppose?"

"I shall not dance," was the answer. "I intend to go up in the balcony to look on. I'll get into a private box if I can."

The telephone bell rang, and Chick answered. Then he turned to Nick.

"It's Corliston, the costumer."

"Find out what he's after. I suppose he wants to apologize for sending me the wrong costume."

That was exactly what Corliston did want. There had been a Spanish officer and a Mexican both ordered, and through an error on the part of some of his men, the Spanish officer had gone to somebody else. He hoped Mr. Carter would not be much inconvenienced. If there was anything he could do, et cetera, et cetera.

"Tell him it is all right," directed Nick shortly.

He put a light overcoat over his Mexican rig, and went down to the taxi waiting for him at the front door.

There had been some counterfeits of big bills worrying the treasury department of late, and Nick Carter had been asked to help in gathering in the persons who were making and "shoving" the bad bills.

Information had reached Nick that some of the guests at the mask ball at the big hotel might be the men he was after.

The hint had come to him anonymously, and he did not like it. Ordinarily he would have hesitated about giving such a message serious attention. He had the contempt of all decent people for unsigned communications of this kind.

But he surmised, from the general appearance of the letter, as well as its wording, that it had been written by somebody who had been in the gang, and had left it with a feeling of being illtreated. So he felt that he could not afford to throw it aside without investigation.

When he reached the hotel, and, with his heavy, bullion-trimmed sombrero in his hand, went up in the elevator to the ballroom floor, he found that the gathering was likely to be a large and gay one.

One of the features of the main ballroom of the Hotel Supremacy is the ring of private boxes overlooking the large floor. The boxes are immediately below the open balcony, so that they are shadowed and give plenty of privacy to guests who may desire to see without being observed.

Nick was standing just inside the ballroom, looking over the floor through the eyeholes of his black mask, and trying to determine whether any of the disguised men promenading or dancing were likely to be his counterfeiters, when an attendant touched him on the elbow, and whispered:

"This way, sir!"

It was one of the rules of Nick Carter to follow any lead that might be thrown out to him, just to see where it would take him. Also, he never permitted himself to show surprise.

He turned to the uniformed attaché and calmly surveyed him, ere he answered quietly, and in a tone very much unlike that of his natural voice:

"All right! Go ahead!"

Without a word, the attendant preceded him to the wide, carpeted staircase leading to the corridor at the back of the private boxes. He stopped at number thirty-six, which was painted on the box door in gilt figures.

Nick Carter took his seat in the box, and leaning his strong chin on his hand, watched with interest the moving throng on the floor below.

"I don't believe Martin or any of the gang are here," muttered Nick, after half an hour's steady contemplation of the promenaders and dancers. "He's heard that I'll be here, and he's keeping dark still. Well, I'll get him yet. I shall stay for a couple of hours, anyhow. He and Lawton, or some of the gang, may come later. They're going to get rid of some of those hundreds to-night, unless that informant of mine is a' liar or very badly mistaken."

There was a little disappointment in Nick Carter's bosom. This man, Shoreham Martin, was a man who had always covered his tracks successfully. At the same time, there was little doubt on the part of Nick Carter that he was the prime mover in one of the most audacious and successful counterfeiting organizations in America.

"If I don't get Martin to-night, it will only be putting off the happy day," continued Nick, to himself. "I have that comfort for my soul."

A soft tap-tap at the door made him swing around and look into the gloom at the back of the box.

The tapping was repeated, and Nick got up and opened the door.

A slender girl, in the black-spangled robes of a "Queen of Night," stepped inside and closed the door.

She was masked, but Nick could see a beautiful chin and white temples, which satisfied him the "Queen" was young. Probably, also, attractive of face.

"I beg pardon——" he began.

"Hush!"

She held up a finger for silence and motioned toward the curtains at the front of the box.

"Draw them together, quick!" she whispered.

Nick Carter had not the slightest idea what this was all about. But the mystery of it appealed to his love of adventure, and he closed the curtains at once.

"Be careful, Marcos," went on the girl, in a tense, hushed voice. "They know you are here."

"The deuce they do!" thought the detective.

"I have had a warning," she continued. "They are going to send you up something to drink. But you must not take any of it."

Nick Carter stared down at the masked face, and noted the general poise of the slight figure with admiration. Mingled with it was perplexity.

"I am sure you are making a mistake," he told her. "Who do you think I am?"

"Don't be foolish!" she rejoined impatiently. "I tell you there is danger. I told you not to come here. But you insisted. Now see what has happened. Don Solado and Miguel have recognized you already."

A loud knock came at the door. The girl leaped away, and her eyes shone through the slits in her mask like half-hidden incandescent lights.

"There! I told you!" she gasped. "Where can I hide?"

In a corner of the dark box Nick Carter's voluminous light overcoat hung on a peg. The girl slipped behind the coat and was completely hidden. Unless some one should come and make a thorough search, there was no fear of her being discovered.

"I don't know who Marcos is," thought Nick. "But it seems as if I am to assume his name for the present. So here goes. I need a little excitement, to make up for my disappointment over Martin."

When he swung open the door, all he saw was a liveried attendant, with a silver salver. On it was a small coffee-pot, with sugar, cream, and a cup and saucer.

"Who ordered that?" demanded Nick.

"I have been sent to ask if you would like a cup of coffee, your highness," said the man imperturbably.

The attachés of the Hotel Supremacy are used to meeting highnesses, kings, lords, tycoons, viceroys, effendis, and so forth. There is nothing in the way of a title that can disturb them. If the Ahkoond of Swat came along, they might wonder to find that historical personage still alive, but they would announce him as coolly as they would "Mr. Jones, of Penn Yan."

"I'm a 'highness,' am I?" thought Nick. "Marcos must be somebody worth representing, anyhow."

He made a sign for the man to put the tray on the small table that was part of the furniture of the box.

When he had gone out and the door had closed, the girl came out from behind the overcoat, and put her hand on Nick's arm just as he was reaching for the coffeepot.

"You don't believe me?" she protested, with a catch in her voice that showed she was hurt. "I tell you I saw Solado whispering to that man who brought in the coffee, and Solado gave him a yellowback bill. That coffee is drugged. They are going to prevent your getting out of New York somehow."

"Even if they have to dope me?" smiled Nick Carter. "Well, I assure you I had no intention of drinking that

coffee. It is not my habit to eat or drink anything that this hes to me with so much mystery."

"There is no mystery in it to me," she rejoined. "I know those men, and so ought you, Marcos—I mean, your highness."

Nick Carter laughed softly, as he put his hand to his mask.

"You will insist that I am somebody else," he said. "The best thing I can do is to let you see my face."

The black satin mask was off with one twitch, and the girl gazed at him steadily for several moments. It seemed as if she could hardly believe the evidence of her own vision.

"Well?" queried Nick.

"You are not Prince Marcos. But you are wonderfully like him. You might be twin brothers, except that your eyes are a little darker than his, and your mouth is firmer. But the shape of your face, your expression, and even your voice are almost identical. It's marvelous!"

She said this in a low voice, as she inspected Nick Carter's countenance in a way that might have been embarrassing to a less self-possessed person. To him it was only amusing.

"What I can't understand," she continued, "is how you come to be in this box, number thirty-six, and why you are in the costume that the other gentleman ordered this afternoon. I know he asked for a Mexican dress, and that the clerk showed him this one—or one like it, for I was with him at the store."

"I believe I can explain part of the mystery," returned Nick. "As a matter of fact, this is not my costume. I ordered an entirely different one from Corliston's——"

"Corliston!" repeated the girl. "Yes, that was the firm we went to."

"The usher who put me into this box judged me by my dress, I suppose," smiled Nick. "He had been told to put a Mexican into thirty-six, and he did as he had been instructed. So we can't blame the man."

Nick Carter could see that the cheeks of the girl were gradually losing their pallor, as if she had been relieved of some great anxiety.

"Are you sure this coffee is drugged?" he asked.

"There is no doubt about that," she answered quickly. "There are two men below who have mistaken you for the—for the other gentleman, and they are going to do him injury if they can."

"Why?"

"That I can't tell you. But the men are very dangerous. Moreover, if they find out that I have come here to warn you, they will kill me."

"I hardly think that," answered Nick Carter. "This is New York. It is not safe to kill people here. Still, some men will take chances. Especially foreigners, and the names you have mentioned have that sort of sound. Did you say Solado and Miguel were watching this box?"

"Yes."

"Very well. If you will permit me to walk with you, we'll make a tour of the ballroom and see what we can find out. I give you my word they shan't kill you while I am with you," he added, with one of those confident smiles which had given courage to so many persons with whom he had had dealings in the past.

She hesitated, but the detective knew she would do as he had suggested.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT NICK FOUND IN HIS SLEEVE

"Do you realize that, if Solado and Miguel believe you to be Prince Marcos, your own life may be in danger—even in this ballroom?" asked the girl.

"I don't think it will."

"Why should you trouble yourself about something in which you have no interest?" she persisted.

"Who says I have no interest in it?" was his rejoinder. "Since I find myself in this affair, I should like to see it through. You do not know me, but I assure you it will give me pleasure to help you, if I can. There is one thing I can tell you, and that is that Prince Marcos is probably in the uniform of a Spanish colonel. That was what I ordered, and if I have his dress, most likely he has mine. Corliston's have mixed it up, that's all."

"It seems likely," she murmured.

"More than likely. Will you come?"

"Yes. I must tell Marcos that Solado is here. But you must not go in that costume."

Nick Carter had already readjusted the black mask over his face, but the girl could tell, from the set of the firm chin, that this man, a stranger to her, was determined to have his way.

"I have never yet seen the man of whom I was afraid," he returned. "There will be no danger, I assure you."

She could not resist his masterful manner. He held out his hand. She took it, and he led her out of the box.

They walked along the corridor, the girl leaning on his arm, and so down the staircase to the ballroom.

As they entered, a dance was just over, and the dancers, chatting and laughing, were leaving the floor.

"All the better," he whispered, behind his mask. "We shall have plenty of room to walk, and a good opportunity to look at everybody as we go along."

Nick Carter, a gallant figure in his gay Mexican dress, and with the sombrero pulled well down over his forehead, strode around the ballroom, the "Queen of Night" by his side.

They had almost entirely encircled the great hall without seeing anything of a Spanish officer, either on the floor, in the balcony, or in any of the boxes.

"It seems as if he isn't here," remarked Nick to his companion.

She did not answer, but her fingers suddenly tightened on his arm.

"Don't look into that alcove on the right," she whispered. "Solado and the other man I mentioned are in there, watching us."

They walked on a few paces. Then Nick Carter, in a natural manner, looked around him, as if taking a general view of the scene.

He saw two men, in the rich garb of Indian princes, with jewels blazing all over them, moving away from the alcove in the direction of the wide doorway at the other end of the ballroom.

It was the only way by which any one could enter or leave. There were several emergency fire exits, but all were fastened shut. They would open automatically in case of need, but were not used otherwise.

This was an invitation affair, and the famous society leader, Mr. van Raikes, was the hostess.

"You see?" she murmured. "Do be careful, sir. They are desperate and dangerous men."

"Desperate and dangerous men are the kind one often has to meet in this world," he replied lightly. "What do you suppose they are going to do now?"

"They will try to prevent your getting away," was her response. "I feel sure of that. They have seen me with you, and they will know I have told you about them. Of course, they think you are Prince Marcos."

"That means that you are in danger," returned Nick, rather more thoughtfully than he had spoken heretofore. "We shall have to——"

"It makes no difference about me," she answered, drawing a quick breath.

"I beg your pardon. It matters a great deal. I don't know what this is all about, nor who Prince Marcos and these other men are. But it looks as if there is something that puts you in an awkward situation. Therefore, I must ask you to depend on me."

"I do depend on you," she declared gratefully. "But what are we to do?"

"I am going out of this room, and you are coming with me," returned the detective promptly.

They went out of the ballroom just as another dance began, passing through several of the carpeted corridors, which were generally used by ballroom guests for promenade.

Nothing was to be seen of the two Indian princes until they reached the end of one corridor and turned a corner into a narrower one.

As they did this, the two men stepped out of a doorway directly in their path.

With a half scream the girl stepped behind Nick Carter, still holding his arm for protection.

"Pardon me!" said the shorter man of the pair, in a somewhat truculent tone. "I should like to have a word with you."

"With me? Why, my dear sir, I don't believe I know you," responded Nick carelessly.

"We have no time for joking, your highness," retorted the man, in a thick, angry voice. "Prince Miguel and I have been trying to get to you for several days. We found out, at a costumer's, this afternoon, that you would be at this ball to-night."

"Once more, let me ask, who are you?" was Nick Carter's rejoinder. "I don't know that you have any reason to be interested in my doings or whereabouts."

With a strange oath, the taller man interposed, jumping forward and pushing his companion aside.

"What is the use of this pretense?" he growled. "I know you are my cousin, and I want to know what you intend to do when you get back home to Joyalita."

Nick Carter permitted himself a laugh of intense amusement—a laugh that evidently grated on the other person's nerves, for he broke out with another oath—in Spanish, or something like it.

"Either you have mistaken me for somebody else, or you are crazy," declared Nick. "This lady and I want to pass on."

Nick Carter pushed his way forward, regardless of the gesticulating stranger.

Together, and with a lightninglike movement, the two men flung themselves upon him.

Nick had anticipated something of the kind, however, and as the shorter man came to the proper distance, the detective shot out his hard American fist straight from the shoulder.

There was a loud spat, as the blow landed on the masked face, and down went Don Solado—for it turned out to be he—flat on his back, evidently knocked out.

"What?" bellowed the taller man, Prince Miguel. "Is that your game? Well, we'll see!"

He flung his arms around the detective, trying to force him backward.

It was a sharp tussle, but there were few men who could overcome Nick Carter in a wrestling match, either impromptu or otherwise.

While the trembling girl watched the fierce, but almost silent, combat, her escort gradually made his adversary give way. At last Nick got the other man where he wanted him.

"Had enough?" asked the detective.

"No! Curse you! I'll——"

The tall stranger never finished the sentence. With a sudden heave, Nick Carter swung him clear off his feet and threw him high in the air, helpless and kicking.

"Oh!" cried the girl, half in terror and half in admiration of the strength and activity of her champion.

Nick Carter's blood was up now, and he determined to finish the job in a thorough manner.

Exerting all his strength, he flung Prince Miguel bodily to the floor. The prince fell like a bag of sawdust, and with no more animation.

His head struck against the wall, and as he fell sprawling across the body of the unconscious Don Solado, there were the two of them dead to the world.

The girl covered her face with her hands. For a few moments she saw nothing. When she looked up again, Nick Carter was calmly adjusting his mask, which had slipped slightly to one side.

His eyes were on her, and he beckoned. When she went over to him, he said, in a cool voice, without any symptom of disturbance:

"The corridor seems to be clear. We can do nothing more here. Let us go."

Drawing her hand through his arm with the courtly ease that came naturally to him, the detective stalked down the side hallway in which the encounter had taken place, until they were in the main corridor.

"I think I will go home now, if you will have somebody call a taxicab for me," she said. "I wish I could thank you, as I ought. But—but, you see, I do not even know your name."

"My name is Carter—Nicholas Carter."

"Carter!" she repeated. "I shall not forget that name."

He took a cardcase from his pocket and from it drew a card, on which was his address, as well as his name.

It did not strike him as peculiar that she did not seem to have heard of him—or, if she had, did not connect him with the detective of international renown.

He knew that such a girl as this, who, presumably, lived a sheltered life, in a home where police matters were very much detached from her existence, was quite likely never to have heard of Nick Carter. It pleased him just as well to think that she never had.

"My services are small enough," he answered, with a smile. "Should you desire them at any time, I shall always be pleased to aid you. I cannot help thinking

Yoxe may be a sequel to this adventure of to-night. If there is, I should like to be in it."

"You mean that?"

"I most certainly do."

Nick Carter turned his head as he heard a scuffling and loud talking behind him.

What he saw was the shorter and thicker of the two figures in the dress of Indian princes at the other end of the corridor, supported by two of the hallboys of the Supremacy. He seemed unable to walk.

The detective did not wait to see whether Don Solado would recognize him or not.

As a taxicab drew up under the porte-cochère, in response to his call, Nick handed his fair companion into the vehicle.

She told the chauffeur to go to Riverside Drive. Then, waving her hand to Nick, as the taxi glided away, she sank back in the seat and seemed to give herself up to her own thoughts.

Another taxi drove up for the detective, and he told the man to take him to his home in Madison Avenue. On the way, he glanced at his bruised knuckles and smiled calmly:

"Rather jarred my fist," he muttered. "But I think I jarred that fellow's jawbone worse. I don't know who Prince Marcos is. But I think he was in luck when Corliston got our costumes mixed. Those two fellows meant mischief to-night if they had caught the real Marcos."

When he got home and was in his library, he threw off the Mexican jacket, glad to get rid of it. Something glittering fell from one of the sleeves and dropped upon the floor.

"Hello! What have I won?" he exclaimed, as he stooped to pick up the object. "A jeweled watch! It must be worth three or four thousand dollars, I should say. That certainly was a swell crowd at the Supremacy to-night. These diamonds and rubies on the watch are magnificent, and the watch alone is a fine one in itself."

It was indeed a splendid thing. It was incrusted with diamonds and rubies. All were large, and three of the diamonds were of exceptional size. Attached to the watch was a fob of black ribbon, with a jeweled cross attached.

Nick Carter remembered his scuffle with the taller man, and he had no doubt that the watch had become entangled in his sleeve at that time.

"Well, when I see him again, I'll give it back. But I am not inclined to run after him."

He dropped the watch and fob into the drawer of his big table and locked the drawer. Then he went to bed.

Looking into Chick's room on his way, he saw that his assistant was snoring away, in utter unconsciousness that anybody had opened the door.

CHAPTER III.

SUSPECTS AND SUSPECTS.

"I am sorry to trouble you, Mr. Carter. But the loss of this watch at the ball really becomes a personal matter with me."

Nick Carter, sitting in the luxurious boudoir of Mrs. Clement van Raikes, two mornings after the great ball at the Hotel Supremacy, bowed, without speaking.

"It was my ball," went on the lady. "As one of the acknowledged leaders in New York society, I was anxious that it should be perfect in every way. It was the first fancy-dress affair I ever had given, and I had spared no pains to make it everything it should be."

"It was a brilliant ball, Mrs. van Raikes," put in the detective. "I can testify to that personally, for I dropped in for a few minutes."

"Indeed? I am glad to hear that, because it may help you in tracing this valuable watch. Of course, intrinsically it would not be of sufficient importance for me to engage the services of the most famous detective in America, nor would you consider it on those grounds."

She paused for Nick Carter to make some remark. He merely bowed gravely. Mrs. van Raikes had spoken the truth, so there was nothing to be added. He certainly was not the man to be sent after a stolen watch, unless there were extraordinary circumstances surrounding the theft.

"The watch is worth four or five thousand dollars, I understand," continued the lady. "But that is not the point. It was the property of a very distinguished man, who was one of my most honored guests."

"Yes?"

"The watch was a present to him from his father, who was a monarch——"

"A king, do you mean?" asked Nick, with a sudden accession of interest.

"Well, I believe they called him a prince. He was a ruler of a small country on the Caribbean Sea—a place called Joyalita. It was settled by some Spanish grandees several centuries ago, and it has always been nominally a monarchy ever since."

"Nominally?" asked Nick. "Do you mean that it is not one in reality?"

"I don't know. I have heard people say that the South American and Central American republics would not permit it to exist so near to them if it really were what it calls itself. It has a constitutional government, and is more nearly a republic than some other countries that call themselves such."

"I see," interposed Nick Carter, anxious to help the lady out of the morass in which she was floundering. "At all events, the prince is the head of the government, and, as I understand it, he takes his position by right of heredity, instead of election?"

"Yes, Mr. Carter, that is it," assented Mrs. van Raikes, with a sigh of relief. "You have explained it exactly."

"Who did you say it was who lost it?"

She had not said anybody, but the detective was curious to know who was the owner of the watch that had come so strangely into his hands, and which watch was put away securely in the safe in his library at that very moment.

"It was Prince Miguel, a cousin of the reigning prince, Marcos——"

"Marcos?" interrupted Nick involuntarily.

"Yes. Do you know him, Mr. Carter?"

"I can't say I know him. In fact, I doubt whether I ever saw him. But I have heard his name."

"That's quite likely," smiled the lady. "You detectives know everybody, of course."

"It is our business. Was it Prince Miguel who told you of his loss?"

"No. The prime minister of Joyalita, Don Solado. He came here less than an hour ago. As soon as he had

gone, I telephoned you. And, by the way, I must thank you again for coming so quickly. I know what a favor I was asking in suggesting that you touch this case at all."

"Why didn't he complain to the hotel management?" asked Nick. "You tell me Prince Miguel discovered his loss soon after midnight on the night of the ball. Why did he wait so long before announcing his loss?"

"I can't say, Mr. Carter," returned Mrs. van Raikes, shrugging her shoulders. "These princes and their advisers are not like us. They have their own ways."

"He does not suspect anybody, you say?"

The lady did not answer for a moment, but stared out of a window across Central Park without seeing anything, apparently.

"The fact is, Mr. Carter, Don Solado does suspect one person—a man with whom he had a few angry words outside the ballroom."

Nick Carter looked up quickly. He was going to hear something interesting now, he thought.

"What was his name? Does Don Solado know?"

"That is a question I cannot answer. Don Solado did not say so. He only told me the man was dressed as a Mexican. I happen to know that one of my guests, a very important man in his own country, intended to come to the ball in a Mexican costume."

"And you will not let me know who he was?"

She shook her head with a little, apologetic smile.

"I am afraid I cannot, Mr. Carter. It would not be proper to reveal a secret that is not my own."

"A secret?"

"Well, it may be a secret. I do not know much about foreign politics, especially those of a place like Joyalita, which seems to be different from most other countries, large or small. That is why I am careful not to say more than I can help."

"Then that is all?" asked Nick Carter, rising. "If I hear anything about this jeweled watch, I will report to you. I think you told me there is an 'M' in diamonds as part of its ornamentation?"

"Yes. I know this is a very small case, Mr. Carter. But my husband persuaded me to call you up. He thought the fact of its being the property of a very important personage, and because there is a value attached to the article entirely distinct from what it would bring if offered for sale, could weigh with you."

"It does," replied the detective. "I should like to have known the name of that man they think might have stolen the watch, however."

"Perhaps you will find out yourself," smiled Mrs. van Raikes. "I am sorry I cannot tell you."

CHAPTER IV.

CLAUDIA COMES FOR HELP.

It was with an amused smile that Nick Carter leaned back in his taxi after leaving Mrs. van Raikes' home in Millionaires' Row, Fifth Avenue, on his way down to his home in Madison Avenue.

He would restore the watch to its owner when he found out who was supposed to have stolen it.

His busy brain had enabled him to see that there was an intrigue of some kind in which the three men and this girl who had interested himself so much were concerned, and he felt that the watch was perhaps the key to it.

At all events, he would not give it up until he knew what the attack upon the Mexican at the ball really meant.

When he stepped into his own house he was met in the hall by his assistant, Chick.

"Say, chief, there's a girl in the library."

"A girl? What kind?"

"A peach," replied Chick enthusiastically. "She wants to see you."

"Did she give her name?"

"No. She said you would know her when you saw her. But she was determined to wait till you got back."

"Must be something important," remarked Nick, as he went upstairs.

"Oh, Mr. Carter, I am so glad you have come! I want your advice about something."

This was the greeting of the girl who had been waiting as Nick opened the door of his library.

It was the "Queen of Night," whom he had met at the ball at the Hotel Supremacy, and in whose company he had had so queer an adventure.

He bowed and pointed to the chair from which she had arisen.

"Sit down, and we'll talk it over, whatever it is," he answered, with a smile. "I hope you are not in any trouble."

"I am very much perplexed about something, and I feel that if something is not done quickly, there may be a tragedy that I ought to prevent."

This was all mysterious enough to make Nick Carter glance inquiringly at his fair visitor.

She was dressed in the plain but expensive garments of a wealthy woman, and everything about her appearance, as well as her speech, proclaimed one who had always been used to the refinements of life.

There was a slight foreign tinge to her accent, but her English was flawless in its choice of words, as well as in the pronunciation.

"You did not ask my name when you met me at the Hotel Supremacy on the night of the ball, notwithstanding that you gave me protection when it was much needed."

"Unless you volunteered the information, I could hardly ask for it," smiled the detective.

"I am Claudia Solado, and——"

"Solado was the name of one of the Indian princes whom I found myself treating rather roughly, I am afraid, and——"

"You did right," she interrupted. "Don Solado is my—my uncle. I am sorry to say that he is a scoundrel."

She made this statement coolly, as if it were an incontrovertible fact, although regrettable.

"If I had known he was a relative of yours, I might have been a little more gentle, nevertheless," declared Nick.

"I am glad you were not. He cares nothing for anybody else, and he would sacrifice anybody or anything to further his own schemes. But I need not trouble you about that. What is worrying me is that I am afraid the enemies of Prince Marcos——"

"The person you think I resemble?" asked Nick, with a smile.

"The same," she answered. "You are very much alike.

You will see it yourself if ever you meet Marcos. I know he was all right on the night of the ball."

"Afterward or before?" asked the detective.

"Afterward. I went to his home and saw him in the taxicab you were kind enough to get for me."

"Yes?"

"I did not give the cabman the address at the time, because I did not know who might be standing around the hotel to overhear me. So I directed the man to take me to Riverside Drive. Afterward I gave him the prince's New York address. It is a house called Crownledge. It looks over the Hudson and faces the Palisades."

"I know the place," remarked Nick. "Stands in its own rather extensive grounds, and runs right down to the river bank."

"That describes it," she smiled. "About Marcos, I was going to say that, although he is strikingly like you in the face, he is not so strong, nor so—so——"

"Impetuous?" laughed Nick Carter. "I'm afraid I did seem so that night. But——"

"I was going to say brave," interrupted Claudia Solado. "I live on the other side of the river, a few miles above Crownledge. When I found Marcos was safe, I had the taxi man take me to the ferry at One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Street, and I went home."

"There is something more, is there not?" asked Nick.

"Yes," she confessed, after some hesitation. "I was satisfied when I found Marcos had not been followed on the night of the ball, and I did not go to see if he was at home until this morning."

"Yes?"

"He and I have always been playfellows—like brother and sister, in fact—and it was natural for me to go and see him. Besides, his mother is living with him in New York, and I may say, without conceit, that I am a favorite of hers."

"I can quite believe it."

Nick had not meant to say this. But it slipped out as he looked at her beautiful, animated face.

She only smiled in acknowledgment of the involuntary tribute, and went on calmly:

"When I went to Crownledge this morning, I could not get in. I rang the electric bell several times, and thumped on the door. There was no response."

"Where were the servants?"

"They were not in the house. Neither was the princess, Marcos' mother. I always call her Aunt Laura. But I remembered that she had talked of going to Newport to visit some friends for a few days, so, when I came to think, I was not surprised that she was absent. That did not explain the absence of Marcos and the servants, however."

"Hardly!" threw in Nick, as she paused.

"The house is not a large one, but there are two maid-servants there, as a rule, besides Prince Marcos' own man. The maids were brought by Aunt Laura from Joyalita. She travels a great deal, and always likes to be as comfortable as possible when away from home. She looks after Marcos, too, when she is with him. Her own maid had gone with her to Newport."

"Didn't you find out anything that would explain the house being untenanted?"

"I can only surmise. My uncle, Don Solado, and Prince Miguel, are in New York for the sole purpose of keeping Marcos away from Joyalita for the present."

"Why?"

"It is one of those political arguments that come up in small countries now and then—and perhaps in big ones, too," she answered simply. "Joyalita has always been an independent State, ruled by the same family for generations."

"I have heard that," commented Nick. "It has seemed a peaceful and prosperous community, too."

"Yes. That is the reason Marcos is opposed to any change. In that he has the backing of most of his advisers. But there is another party that is not satisfied. It is made up of men who think they would get more for themselves if there were a different form of government."

"You find such men in every country," observed the detective slowly.

"In a few words, here is the state of things," continued Claudia: "Joyalita has been asked to join an alliance with some of the smaller States in South America—for mutual protection and advantage. That is the way it is put by the agitators. Marcos is bitterly opposed to the change, but unless he can get home before the eighteenth of this month, there is every fear that it will go through."

"And these two gentlemen who jumped on me at the ball are doing their best to keep him here?" suggested Nick.

"That's it exactly. A big vote will be taken at a council meeting in Joyalita on the eighteenth, but if Prince Marcos is there, he will sign a negative resolution, and the whole scheme will fall through. This is the tenth, so there are eight days in which Marcos could get back home. He could get there in very much less time than that, but he meant to go at once, so that there should be no danger of his arriving too late."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Marcos has been taken away from Crownledge, I am convinced. He will be held somewhere until too late to get to Joyalita by the eighteenth. If you could suggest some way of finding out where Marcos is——"

"The enemy has taken away the servants, too," mused Nick, half aloud. "They did their work thoroughly while they were about it."

"That is what will make it so hard to trace Marcos," she murmured, shaking her head. "We can't even get into the house."

"But that is just what we will do," corrected Nick. "And as for our tracing Prince Marcos; well, I have an assistant who will be a great help, unless I am much mistaken."

He touched a bell, and Chick came in from the other room, glad of an opportunity to gaze again upon the lovely Claudia Solado.

"Where's Captain?" asked Nick.

"Downstairs," was Chick's answer, as his glance wandered to the fair face of the visitor.

"All right! We'll use him this afternoon," announced the detective.

"May I go with you with this gentleman—Captain—Captain—what is his name?" asked the girl. "Is he a soldier?"

Nick Carter and Chick both laughed. The former answered, with considerable emphasis:

"Yes, Captain is very much of a soldier, in the sense that he is always ready to fight—and to obey orders. He

is our bloodhound, trained to police work, and, we think, one of the finest dogs in the world."

"Oh! I should like to see him. I may go, may I not?"

"If you will," returned Nick. "You will be a great help, and we will try to keep you from harm."

"I'd like to see the man that will harm you when I'm around," blurted out Chick, clenching both fists.

"Chick!" warned Nick Carter. "That will do. Miss Solado has perfect faith in you, I have no doubt. Meanwhile, do not frighten her by making her think we shall meet people who will put your chivalry to the test."

Claudia gave Chick a smile that quite counterbalanced his chief's gentle rebuke.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN IN THE SUMMERHOUSE.

It was early in the afternoon when the well-appointed limousine motor car belonging to Nick Carter—seldom used, although always ready—skimmed along Riverside Drive, going uptown.

The driver was the detective's trusted chauffeur, Danny Maloney, and there were four passengers: Nick Carter, his assistant, Chick, Miss Claudia Solado, and Captain, the big bloodhound.

Nick had chosen the limousine, in preference to the powerful touring car he generally used in expeditions of this kind, because the closed vehicle shut off any prying eyes that possibly might be trained upon them.

"I don't like to put you to all this trouble, Mr. Carter," declared the girl. "It may be that Prince Marcos will be at home now. There is no certainty that he has been taken away against his will. Strange coincidences occur sometimes. One of them may account for the simultaneous absence of my Cousin Marcos, the servants, and Aunt Laura."

"All that is possible," conceded Nick, "but does not seem probable. At all events, we'll go and see. By the way, when did you see Don Solado and Prince Miguel last?"

"I dined with them at their hotel, the Constitutional, last night. It was at the request of my uncle. My mother was with me. I have not found out yet whether my uncle and Prince Miguel recognized me on the night of the ball or not. I am inclined to think they did. They seemed to be pumping me during dinner."

"They did not get much out of you, I'll bet a dollar," put in Chick.

"I did not tell them anything, because I feel sure they are concerned in Marcos' disappearance now, and that they wanted to find out whether I knew anything about it. I did not at that time, so I was able to appear quite innocent. My mother is very deaf and something of an invalid. She took no part in the conversation."

"Your mother was not at the ball at the Supremacy, was she?" asked the detective.

"No. She is not strong enough to bear much excitement. Indeed, she did not know that I was there. But I had my own reasons for being present, when I found there was a conspiracy against Marcos. You can understand there is at least one person who would like to take the place as head of this country."

Nick Carter nodded, without speaking. He understood the situation very well. There was nothing to be gained by questioning Claudia further.

They got to the gateway of Crownledge, and Chick opened the big iron gates, which were unlocked.

The limousine slipped around the curving roadway and stopped before the front entrance of the house.

The residence stood in a lonely part of the road, and as there was a thick growth of large trees inside, the visitors were well screened from the observation of any casual passers-by.

Nick went up on the porch. One glance at the letter box told him no one had been at the house for twenty-four hours, at least. The box was stuffed with newspapers which had not been taken in after the mail carrier had been there.

"No doubt there are letters in the box, too," muttered the detective.

Turning to Chick, he ordered him, in an offhand way, to open the front door.

There was a lock on the door, and a good one. But Nick Carter knew his assistant would make little of that if he were told to get in.

It took Chick about five minutes to get the door open. He had used a piece of thin wire to pick the lock, and had done it as skillfully as would have been possible to a professional burglar.

The two detectives and the girl entered, followed by Captain. Chick closed the door behind them.

The hall, spacious and lofty, ran straight through the house from the front door to the back, and by it the girl led her companions to the kitchen.

"Nobody here!" she remarked, in a low, awe-stricken tone, such as comes natural to many people when going through an empty house. "I thought I might find one of the maids in the kitchen. Though that was not likely, either, or they would have come to the front door."

"They must have got out in a hurry," remarked Nick.

He nodded toward the table—on which were the remains of a half-consumed meal—and then at a coffeepot on the stove.

After visiting the servants' bedchambers, in which they saw other indications of a hasty packing and departure, Claudia showed them the door of the large bedroom in which Prince Marcos usually slept.

Adjoining it was his mother's chamber. It was large, like her son's, and more luxuriously appointed.

The latter apartment was in an orderly condition, with the bed neatly made and decorated with pillow shams. But the bedroom belonging to Marcos showed that it had been disturbed by some rather turbulent proceedings.

"Seems to have been a fuss of some kind in here," observed Chick. "A regular rough-house, from the look of things."

It did look like a "rough-house," as that term is used in its slang sense.

The window curtains were hanging in disorder from a broken pole, and the mirror of the dresser was cracked in a star, as if something had been hurled into the middle of it. The drawers were open, and their contents strewn about the floor.

Nick Carter carefully studied the room, and his brain worked rapidly in piecing together the evidence before him. It did not take him long to arrive at a definite conclusion.

"The bed has not been slept in," he remarked. "But you can see where a person has been thrown down on it. The condition of the window shows that somebody—perhaps the man who had been thrown down on the bed, tried to escape by the window, but was overcome before he could raise the shade."

"They attacked Marcos in his own home," murmured Claudia. "It was Marcos who was thrown on the bed, no doubt. The question is, where is he now?"

"That's what we are going to try to find out," returned Nick. "Come here, Captain."

The detective had picked up a pair of bedroom slippers that were partly under the bed. He held them close to the broad nostrils of the bloodhound.

"Seek, Captain!"

It took Captain a few moments to get to work. He seemed rather uncertain at first. Soon, however, he realized what he was to do, and, after padding about the carpet backward and forward, halting and sniffing at intervals, he made for the doorway.

"Come along!" whispered Nick. "He's got the scent!"

The dog went down the staircase, sniffing on each stair, until he was in the lower hall. Then he crossed to what was obviously the drawing-room.

The door was opened for Captain, and he took advantage of this to cross the floor of the big room to the grand piano, which was open. Here he smelled about for a little while, and then suddenly trotted off at a tangent to one of the big windows that extended from floor to ceiling, and gave upon a side porch.

Nick Carter noted that the catch of this window was unfastened. He pushed open the casement, and out went Captain, across the porch and down the flight of steps close by.

"It is easy to see that the tenant here is only temporary," remarked Nick, as he pointed to the neglected condition of the grounds. "The lawn has been cut in a sort of way, but the flower beds have not been weeded, and the edges of the lawn are grown up with long, straggly grass."

"That's true," agreed the girl. "Marcos has not lived here long, and he would have been on his way home to Joyalita before this if there had been no interference with him."

The hound moved slowly along. The scent appeared to be very weak. He stuck to it, however, and at last, on reaching the end of the garden, went to the door of a wooden summerhouse fashioned like a Chinese pagoda.

It was built solidly of hard woods. The door was shut.

There was a wide wooden step in front, and here Captain crouched, his nose to the slit under the door.

There was no mistaking the meaning of the dog's movements. Something or somebody was in the pagoda carrying the scent he had been following.

A cry of terror and apprehension broke from the lips of the girl.

"Oh, Mr. Carter, he is in there, I know. Suppose he should be dead!"

Nick Carter gave Chick a look he understood, and attacked the padlock which held a hasp in place and secured the door.

Chick touched Claudia on the arm and beckoned her away, as if he had something important to say. Nick, with a piece of wire, picked the padlock as deftly as his assistant had the lock of the front door of the house, and threw open the door.

One look inside was enough. Again he turned and gave his assistant the warning look on which he had acted so promptly before.

Chick was not quick enough this time, however. The girl slipped past him and was in the pagoda almost as soon as Nick.

Uttering a gasp of horror, she forced her way farther into the little place.

Nick Carter was between her and the object she tried to see, and he was busy.

On a wooden bench, with a perforated seat, which ran around three sides of the summerhouse, lay a man, unconscious apparently. He was bound hand and foot, and the ropes about his body had been run through the perforations of the seat, as well as around the whole bench itself.

Whoever had done the work had used cruel ingenuity to make sure the prisoner should not break loose.

"It is not Marcos!" suddenly exclaimed Claudia.

Nick Carter first of all pulled from the mouth of the captive a handkerchief that had been tightly fastened about his lips. As he did so, a wedge of cloth dropped from between the teeth.

"Is it murder?" asked Chick, trying to look over his chief's shoulder.

"Looks like it," was Nick Carter's curt reply.

It did indeed look like it, for the victim's lips were blue, his face livid, and his eyes had closed.

The detective cut the bonds with two or three slashes of his pocketknife, and Claudia Solado heaved a deep-drawn sigh.

"Poor fellow!" she murmured. "I believe I know who he is. Unless I am much mistaken, he is Marcos' valet."

Nick Carter knelt by the side of the still figure and listened intently at the chest. A moment later he got up, and took one of the nerveless wrists in his cool, steady fingers.

"There is a slight pulse," he murmured, half to himself. "I think we can bring him around." Then, louder: "Chick! Give me a hand! Let us put him on the floor. We shall have a better chance of handling him there."

They stretched the unfortunate valet on the floor, where Nick Carter and his assistant applied "first-aid" methods, rubbing his limbs, loosening his clothing, and so forth.

Claudia did not remain. She had darted away while the two detectives were taking the man from the bench, and went to the house.

In a few minutes she was back, with a decanter and a glass. As she poured some strong brandy into the glass, to give to Nick Carter, he noticed that her hand was bleeding, and commented on the fact.

"I couldn't help it," she returned. "There was no time to get to the front door, so I broke a glass panel at the side and got in that way."

"You have pluck!" observed Nick Carter, in simple admiration.

CHAPTER VI.

A CLEW BY WATER.

It was not long before the treatment had its effect on the injured valet. The chafing and massage, aided by the brandy, restored him much quicker than might have been expected.

He was looking about him wildly when Nick decided that his complete recovery would be accelerated if he were carried into the house.

"Give me a lift, Chick!"

The two raised the man from the floor, and laid him over one of the brawny shoulders of Nick Carter.

The valet was heavy and large, but the detective carried him along without apparent effort into the house, up the stairs, and into one of the bedrooms.

"If you can find something warm for him to eat, Miss Solado," remarked Nick, as they put the man on the bed, "it will help as much as anything. We will put him to bed in the meantime."

Claudia was only too glad to do anything she could. She went to the kitchen and foraged for supplies. She was fortunate enough to find a can of soup. This she cooked on a gas stove, and soon had it ready for the invalid.

When she came to the bedroom again she found him sitting up in bed and talking. As he attacked the hot soup, his strength came back faster, and he told his story in a fairly connected way.

It all resolved itself into this: On the morning before, he went to call his employer, as usual, and, as he passed the windows of the house, he noticed a handsome private steam yacht anchored in the river, not far from shore, so that it should be out of the regular channel of traffic.

In Prince Marcos' room he heard a scuffling, while his employer's voice was raised in anger and protest.

When the valet got there -which he did as fast as he could—he found Marcos struggling with two men.

Before the valet could give any help, another man appeared from somewhere and knocked him senseless with some heavy weapon—perhaps a revolver, although he could not be sure.

"Would you know that yacht if you saw it again?" asked the detective.

"I am almost sure I should," was the quick reply.

"Good! What is your name?"

"Phillips, sir."

"Now, Phillips, what became of Prince Marcos after that, so far as you know?"

"I came to my senses again, and staggered to the window, because I saw that the prince had gone from the room. Down in the garden two of the men were carrying him to the waterside, where a skiff was tied up to the private landing."

"And they took Prince Marcos to the yacht in that skiff?"

"That's what I suppose. I didn't see it, because they caught me when I went out of the house to help the prince."

"You did that, Phillips?" interposed the girl. "That was very brave of you."

Phillips' eyes lighted up at this praise from the beautiful Claudia, as he replied simply:

"I did it, of course, Miss Solado. I had to, because the prince would have done it for me. He is not afraid of anything. However, I wasn't able to help him. I wasn't strong after being knocked over the head, and when two of them came for me at once, I had to go under."

There was no "grand stand play" about Phillips. He told his story with perfect simplicity, and as if he had done only what any other man must have done under the circumstances.

"It was very hard on you to lie there on that bench so many hours," put in Chick.

"I thought it was death," was the reply. "I felt myself growing weaker and weaker, and at last I was all in, my senses gone. The gag had prevented my shouting, or I might have attracted the attention of people going past, either on the river or the road. It would have been only an off chance, at that, but better than nothing."

"You did not know any of the men?" asked Nick.

"They were all strangers to me."

The girl could not help giving a slight sigh of relief. At least, her uncle had not taken a personal part in the attack on the valet.

These men who had come were doubtless hired rascals. She had heard of such men. There were bravos in all countries.

"Which way was the yacht headed when you saw her?"

Nick asked this question without expecting to gain any useful information, no matter what the reply might be. It was an easy matter to turn a vessel another way, especially one propelled by steam.

"She was headed up the river," replied Phillips.

Nick thought for a few minutes. He argued that there would be no particular object to be gained by going up the Hudson, unless it was the intention of the men who had stolen Marcos to get him ashore as soon as convenient and spirit him away to some retreat in the mountains—the Adirondacks, perhaps.

On the other hand, he reflected that these men were very cunning, and would be quite likely to follow his own line of reasoning, with the purpose of circumventing him.

"They may go down the river, because they would think that I should regard that as the least desirable for them, and thus they would try to fool me. On the other hand, they might go up, and——"

He stopped his half-audible musings and laughed. He was just where he had started. His reflections did not lead him anywhere, it seemed, and he would have to depend on chance, after all.

"You will let me get up now, won't you?" asked Phillips. "I want to go and find the prince."

"No," returned Nick, with a positive shake of the head. "You must remain in bed for the rest of this day, anyhow. I will leave my assistant with you. I shall go and look for Prince Marcos, and if he is to be found at all, I will get to him."

"But do you know that Prince Marcos is in great danger—from political enemies, who will——"

"Yes, Phillips," interposed Claudia. "This gentleman knows all about it. You need not worry. He will find Prince Marcos if any one can. You have heard of Nicholas Carter, of course?"

"What? The great detective, who caught that gang of thieves in South America two years ago?" broke in Phillips. "Is this the great Nicholas Carter? It seems impossible that I can be talking to one whom I have thought of so often. Wonderful!"

Phillips delivered himself of these sentiments with the simple sincerity with which he said everything. He could hardly bring it to his understanding that he was actually

face to face with Nicholas Carter, the greatest detective in the world.

"I shall have to send you home before I do anything else," said Nick, turning to Claudia. "My chauffeur, Danny Maloney, is thoroughly dependable. He is much more than a chauffeur to me. He is often a very able assistant in my professional work.

"I have no doubt that he would take me home safely," replied the girl. "But—I cannot go home now."

"Cannot go home? Why?"

"I must go with you."

"Go with me?" echoed Nick Carter. "I'm afraid that would be impossible. You could not run into the danger that may face me when I come up with the rascals who so nearly killed poor Phillips. You can see from that how desperate they are."

"Nevertheless, I must go," returned Claudia, with gentle firmness.

"It would be altogether too dangerous."

"I expect it to be dangerous. That is why I want to come."

This was unanswerable, although Nick tried to answer it. He soon saw that he might as well spare his breath.

With a shrug and smile, he turned to his assistant.

"Well, Chick, keep close watch here, and take care of Phillips. Miss Solado intends to go with me, and there is nothing much to be said. I will go down to the boat-houses and see whether I can get a power launch. Will you wait here till I return?" he asked the girl. "I shall not be long. I'll go down in the motor car."

"I will wait," she answered quietly.

A few minutes later Nick Carter was in his limousine, and Danny Maloney was bowling him along Broadway to the place where the detective knew he could hire a launch.

"Joe Travers will have one, I know," he told himself, as he leaned back comfortaably, while Maloney drove on with his usual unconcern.

Joe Travers was an old acquaintance of Nick's, and he was only too pleased to take the detective into his boat-house and show him where he had, under shelter, a power launch which proclaimed itself at first glance a fine specimen of its class.

It was about five o'clock when Nick Carter chugged up to the boat landing of Crownledge and fastened his craft to the big iron ring.

Before he could get up to the house, Claudia came running down to the riverside, with Chick and the bloodhound close behind.

Chick was glad of the opportunity of helping the pretty girl into the boat. Soon she was comfortably seated in the stern. Then Nick again took his place at the engine and steering wheel.

"Look after Phillips, Chick! When he seems able to take care of himself, as he will by the morning, I feel sure—you can go home, with Captain, and keep close to the telephone. I may call you up at any time."

The engine in the launch was a powerful one, and the boat went shooting up the Hudson as if prepared to overhaul any other craft that might come in its way.

"Do you think we shall find Marcos, Mr. Carter?" asked Claudia, after a rather long silence, broken only by the chugging of the engine and the swish of the water past the hull. "Have you any idea where he is likely to be?"

"I may be mistaken," replied Nick. "But I can't help feeling that we shall get on his trail before morning."

And, as he hustled the launch along, he believed thoroughly what he said.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE BRINK OF BATTLE.

"There's a light across the river, in the shadow of the Palisades," remarked the girl, when they had gone several more miles. "It is some boat, or ship, of course. Might not that be the yacht?"

Nick Carter smiled, without letting the girl see his face. This was not difficult, for his back was turned toward her. He knew that lights on the Hudson were common enough, and that it was a hundred chances to one against this particular light belonging to the yacht they were after.

He swung the boat diagonally across the river to see.

"It isn't a yacht at all," he remarked, in a low tone, to the girl. "Just a barge, loaded with broken stone—to ballast the railroad over here, I guess. We'll have to go farther."

As they were on that side of the river, in the shadow of the Palisades, Nick kept his launch parallel with the bank, taking note of all the lights he saw, but not finding any that belonged to the kind of steam yacht he wanted to find.

They got to the end of the fifteen miles of Palisades, and found themselves moving along opposite the irregular hills and bluffs one sees farther up the river.

Houses nestle among the hills at intervals, and many dusty ribbons of roadway may be discerned criss-crossed here and there, peeping out of thickets, twisting around the shoulder of a hill, or coming seemingly straight out of the ground. The scenery along the Hudson is generally diversified and always beautiful.

Suddenly a fair-sized house appeared to jump from the blackness of a wooded slope they were passing, with lights in some of the windows.

"That's a pleasant-looking home," observed Nick Carter, as he kept his wheel steady while glancing at the shore on his left. "Within easy motoring distance of New York, and yet out in the country entirely."

The girl said something quietly in assent. Then she broke out, in a tense tone:

"Isn't that the yacht we want? It looks different from the others we have seen, and it agrees with the description we got from Phillips so far as I can make out."

"You're right, I think," returned Nick, in a low tone. "But don't speak loud. If that is the yacht, we may be sure they are on the watch for attack. They will think the police may hear of their performance at Crownledge. That would naturally mean pursuit."

He ran the launch silently toward shore, the maneuver bringing the outline of the yacht between him and the faint moonlight showing in the sky.

"I see a man in a chair on the roof of the cabin," he whispered. "He is smoking."

"You have good eyes, Mr. Carter," remarked the girl. "I don't see anything on the yacht at all."

"The red light of his cigar appears now and again, as he shifts his position," explained the detective. "Now I catch the odor of the cigar. The wind is blowing this

way. Don't you get the Havana fragrance? It is very faint, but it is there."

But Claudia's senses were not as keen as Nick Carter's. She could neither see nor smell the cigar.

Nick ran the launch up to the bank, and found a small landing stage, with several iron rings.

Up the hill he could make out one of the lights in the house he had discerned from the middle of the river. This landing stage was placed here for the use of the occupants of the house, of course.

Once the launch had been secured, Nick looked about him for some means of getting to the yacht without being perceived by the man smoking on the cabin, or anybody else who might be on watch.

"I can't take the launch," he muttered. "The chugging of the engine will attract attention at once. I'll have to drift in with the tide and paddle with that emergency oar to get there at all. But I cannot handle such a cumbersome craft as the launch in reconnoitering. I want to go right under their counter."

It was true that Nick had shut off the engine of the launch when some distance from the yacht. He had also put out the one light they had carried.

His object was to make the people on the yacht suppose it was some gay party taking a ride on the river at night—a common-enough proceeding—and that the ceasing of the engine sound was due merely to the launch passing on its way.

The detective was accustomed to consider all contingencies when working on a case, and it was seldom, indeed, that any of his plans miscarried through carelessness or lack of foresight on his own part.

"I could swim out there," he reflected. "But that would be stupid, if there is anything else. Let me investigate."

Cautioning the girl to sit still in the launch, he went ashore and found his way to a well-equipped boathouse, with a padlock on the door.

The padlock was not fastened. It was hanging loose in the hasp, and there was a key in it.

"Somebody has been in this place lately," thought Nick. "Or there may be a man or two in it at this moment. There is only one way to find out, and that is to go in."

The door was slightly ajar, and the detective pulled it wide enough to permit the passage of his body.

He was in the deep shadow, for the door was at the side, while the lower end of the structure ran out over the water, so that boats could be slipped out of the house into the river down the greased runways without much exertion.

Nick Carter was used to boathouses and boats. He had a boathouse of his own at a country home he owned, but which he seldom occupied for more than three or four weeks each year.

It did not take him long to decide that the house was empty. This was what he had hoped, for he wanted to help himself to a skiff.

The opening into the river, at the end of the runways, was guarded by double doors, bolted inside, but not locked.

Nick selected his skiff—a small, but substantial craft, rather broader in the beam than might have been desired if he had meant to make high speed.

Soon he had it on the runway, ready to shoot down into the water when released.

He opened one of the doors, took his place in the skiff, and let slip the catch.

The boat slid easily down, struck the water with the slightest sound of a splash, and lay gently rocking while Nick Carter got out the light oars to take him out to where the yacht lay at anchor.

It was too dark for him to see the launch. But there was no sound from that direction, and he was satisfied that Claudia Solado was sitting where he had left her, obeying his instructions to make absolutely no noise while he was gone.

He muffled his oars with a handkerchief and one of his kid gloves, so that there was no sound as he stole up to the yacht and paused in the shadow of her rather broad stern.

He was so close that he could steady himself by one of the rudder chains as he listened.

Nothing seemed to be going on in the yacht, and if he had not seen the man on the cabin roof, still enjoying his cigar, he might have thought everybody on board was asleep, watch and all.

"What the dickens they want to stay on the yacht at all for if they belong to that house is more than I can explain," muttered Nick. "At least, until I have looked into the matter a little more."

He deliberately threw his painter rope around the rudder chain, and secured the skiff in that way.

So long as the yacht was at anchor—as he had seen she was, swinging to the tide with her bow pointing upstream—there was no danger of harm to the skiff.

Of course, if the yacht were to start, a different story might be told.

Nick could climb anywhere that a man might expect to be able to go, and soon he went nimbly up the stern of the yacht, taking advantage of every ledge and protection on the way, until he was safely on deck.

He lay down flat behind the log cabin.

It was a handsome vessel, this yacht. Polished brass, white paint, silken curtains at the windows, and every equipment perfect of its kind, told the detective that no expense had been spared to make the vessel a fine one.

Nick Carter was a yachtsman, and he could appreciate every point of excellence—many of which might have escaped the eye of a person who knew less than himself about such things.

Cautiously he crept to the side of the cabin on the landward side. Here he was in deep shadow, for the slowly rising moon, partly obscured by clouds, was on the opposite side of the river.

"That fellow either has a very large cigar, or he smokes it very slowly," muttered Nick Carter. "I wish he'd get through and go below. Then there might be a chance for me to find out whether Prince Marcos is aboard."

He pulled himself to his feet, so that, when he stepped upon a block, his eyes were above the level of the cabin roof.

Here he had a good view of the smoker's feet, only a few yards away, and could see that the man was leaning back comfortabaly in a deck chair, apparently quite content with the way things were going.

"I wish I could see that chap's face," reflected Nick. "His general shape is like that of the bigger of the two men I had the argument with at the Supremacy. Still,

there are thousands of men in New York of about his build, so that proves nothing."

This did not satisfy Nick Carter, however.

Putting two and two together, and considering that this was almost certainly the yacht in which the abductors of Marcos had carried him away from Crownledge, it was quite reasonable to suppose that this big man in the chair on the cabin roof was really Miguel—as Claudia Solado had given his name.

Prince Miguel was calmly smoking throughout these surmises of the detective—for it may as well be admitted that the big man really was Miguel—and Nick tried to determine what should be his next move.

"I might get up there and tackle him unawares," he muttered. "Then, if we did not make noise enough to attract the attention of the crew or others on the yacht, I might squeeze a confession out of him. All I want is this Marcos. Then I don't care what is done."

He turned this over in his mind for a few minutes. Then he decided it would not do.

There could hardly fail to be a great deal of racket if he were to scuffle with Prince Miguel. The latter was a powerfully built fellow, and would make a desperate resistance, no matter how the combat might come out in the end.

As it happened, Nick Carter was not called upon to decide the question for himself.

While he stood on his block, peering under the railing around the roof at the man in the chair, another man came carefully up the steep iron steps to the roof and stood statuelike behind the unsuspecting Miguel.

The attitude of the newcomer was that of one who had deliberately chosen the best way to make a sudden onslaught.

Nick Carter caught his breath in stern enjoyment of the contest he felt he was about to witness.

CHAPTER VIII.

NICK WINS A POINT.

"This is a tangle all around," he said to himself. "Who the deuce is this fellow, getting ready to lay out our friend Miguel? Can it be——"

He did not finish the sentence. At that instant some unexplainable impulse made Miguel swing around in his chair.

He saw the tall figure standing there, and, without hesitation, he picked up the deck chair on which he had been sitting and flung it full at the head of the other man.

Nick Carter saw the man put up his hands to protect his head. Then the chair smashed into him and he reeled backward across the cabin roof, holding the chair in front of him.

In the darkness, Nick was unable to see whether the chair had struck him in the face or not. Certain it was that it had taken him off his balance, and that he seemed to have been weakened in some way.

He staggered backward across the roof and fell hard against the low railing. For an instant he tried to save himself.

But he had nothing to clutch at, and could only go. Turning almost a complete somersault, he went off the roof and down into the water with a loud splash.

"A good thing he didn't strike the deck on his head. That would have settled him. Even in the water he may not be altogether safe."

This last thought made Nick let himself down quickly from the block and sent him scurrying to the stern of the yacht, where he could get to his skiff.

It was not an easy task to get down without being seen, for the noise of the scuffle had attracted three men who slept forward, and were part of the deck crew of the vessel.

But Nick reached his skiff, and, as he heard a gasping cry for help some distance out in the river, he rowed rapidly in that direction.

He was only just in time. In the faint moonlight he made out a ghastly white face—it was Prince Marcos'. Nick saw that he was swimming on his back almost unconsciously.

There is little doubt but that, if Marcos had not been a magnificent swimmer, he would have drowned before the detective reached him.

As it was, his arms and legs moved practically of their own volition. They had been used so often in swimming that they went through the notions mechanically so long as he had strength enough to use them at all.

As Nick Carter reached for him, the nearly unconscious man grabbed at the boat, while the water gurgled in his throat and seemed to be choking him.

It was an unfortunate grab. The skiff tipped over, and before the detective could save himself, he was in the water with the man he had come to rescue.

Now began one of those awful struggles that good swimmers dread so much, and yet which may come to any of them at any time.

Nick Carter knew it would be useless to expostulate with the drowning man. He must try to beat him off. It would be the only way to save both their lives.

But Marcos was strong, and in the water he could use his strength to the disadvantage of his would-be rescuer, even though Nick was much the more powerful of the two.

At the first collision, they went down together. Here was Nick Carter's chance. The detective had often practiced holding his breath for long periods, so the ducking was not so trying to him as it was to Marcos.

For this reason Nick deliberately stayed below the surface as long as he could, with the object of taking all the life out of the other man. It would be possible to handle him if he were unconscious.

But Marcos had good lungs, and though they were under the water long enough to have rendered many a person unconscious, they came up without any material change in the condition of either.

Marcos had recovered somewhat from the blow of the chair, which had been the main cause of his dazed condition. The water had revived him to some extent, but he hardly knew what he was doing.

He fought wildly with Nick, trying to hold to him, and down they went again.

This time, however, the detective contrived to loosen himself a little. Getting to the surface with a frantic effort, he delivered a jolt under the chin of Marcos that knocked him out entirely.

"I'm sorry for that," muttered Nick. "But I had to do it. There was no other chance for either of us. Now, how am I to get him to shore?"

He got the senseless man across his shoulder, and struck

out vigorously in the general direction of the launch and away from the yacht.

"Hello! They've lowered a boat from the yacht. They are not going to let their man drown, if they can help it, I suppose. Well, they don't get him."

A boat with three men in it had left the yacht, and Nick could just make out its dark outline as he looked toward the half-lighted sky in the vicinity of the dull moon.

"If they get this fellow, we shall be just where we were before," was the detective's reflection. "I've got to prevent that. It will be a hard swim to shore. But I believe I can make it if I am not interfered with."

The boat was rowing swiftly toward him, and soon there came a long flash of white light across the water which struck him squarely in the face.

Simultaneously, the man who sat in the bows, looking ahead, called out, in a gruff tone:

"Pull hard! And you, at the helm, steer toward the shore a little. I see him right ahead!"

"Aye, aye, sir!"

Nick Carter was quite aware that he could not beat the boat to shore. Even if he had been unencumbered, he could not have expected that he would swim faster than a husky man could pull a light boat containing only three persons.

But it was not the habit of the detective to yield until he was overcome by the enemy. "Fight to the end," was his motto, and he had won many a seemingly hopeless battle by adhering to this determination.

"I wish you could swim a little yourself," he said, in a gasping whisper, to the unconscious man who now weighed so heavily across his shoulder. "I'll have to get you in some other position, I am afraid, or you'll drag both of us under."

He began to shift his burden a little, but without much advantage, when suddenly there came to his ears the low chugging of the launch.

"She hasn't got all the power on," he muttered. "But, by Cæsar, she is moving it a little. I always knew that girl was better than the average. She's as good as a man in many thing that you wouldn't expect a girl to know much about."

His quick ear had told him just what had happened. Claudia had loosened the launch from the landing stage, and putting on some of the power, was coming rather slowly to his aid.

"If she can get to me before the skiff, it will be a good thing," he muttered. "I wish she'd hurry up that engine a little. What a pity I did not give her a lesson while we were coming up the river! However, it's too late now. I'll have to be grateful that she can do as much as this."

It soon resolved itself into a three-cornered race, with the chances about equal.

If the launch were to get to Nick and the unconscious Marcos first, the probability was that the men in the boat would be circumvented. There was still another chance. Even if Nick could swim away in the darkness, so that the searchlight could not pick him up, it would not be bad.

On the other hand, if the boat got to him before the launch, then the whole purpose of the expedition up the river would be frustrated at once.

It was soon apparent to the detective that Claudia was handling the launch very well so far as the steering was concerned.

She did not quite understand the engine. Therefore, she hesitated about opening the throttle too wide, with the result that her speed was less than it need have been.

On came the boat, while the launch bored her way forward steadily in the other direction.

Nick Carter never allowed his exertions to flag for an instant. Whatever the boats might do, he knew that it would be better for him to get as near shore as possible.

"There he is!" exclaimed the gruff voice he had heard before, as the small white light sought out his face again. "He's swimming for shore. We've got him now!"

"Have you!" muttered Nick, quickening his stroke. "I'm not so sure of that, my friend!"

He saw that the launch was about the same distance from him on one side as the skiff was on the other.

Allowing for the difference in speed—for the launch was coming much faster than the rowboat, even without the full pressure of her engine—Claudia ought to get to him a minute or so sooner than the skiff.

Once he could get Marcos on board the launch, the detective was not afraid of anything that might happen to himself.

He did not believe the men on the yacht would know that he had been their assailant at the ball, and he was satisfied that when they knew who he was, the power of his name, as that of a detective who had been heard of even in Joyalita, would be his protection.

"If that is not enough protection," he told himself grimly, "then I have a pair of active fists that have never failed me yet."

He increased his efforts, but was swimming now straight for the launch, rather than for the shore, although in a general way he was going shoreward, too.

"Stop!" bellowed the gruff voice.

Nick Carter did not answer, but the girl, trying to increase the speed of the launch, somehow got her hand on the valve that governed the whistle, and a mocking scream was the consequence.

The detective grinned. It was a good answer to the skiff, he thought, although he was rather surprised that the girl had hit on it so opportunely.

"She's learning the launch pretty fast," he told himself. "It's made them mad, I guess."

"If you don't give up, it will be the worse for you, Marcos!" came from the gruff man in the skiff, as he waved his light about.

"Marcos, eh?" thought Nick. "This is the right man I have here, after all. I thought I recognized him. Well, he isn't going on board that yacht again, if I know myself—and I think I do."

He felt a thrill of satisfaction as he saw how the launch was cutting through the water, faster than at first.

"She's getting the hang of it," he muttered. "Hope she won't run us down. I can't do much dodging with about a hundred and seventy pounds of Joyalita prince on my back. Whew! He gets heavier every second."

In another minute he saw there was no doubt about the outcome of the race. The launch was gaining rapidly.

The man in the bow of the skiff recognized this fact, and he was swearing in Spanish with such gusto that it

might be wondered where he had learned so many oaths.

"He'll have to swear in another tongue if he keeps on," laughed Nick. "The Spanish language won't be rich enough for him much longer. Why doesn't he give us a few of those in English? Or in Chinese? That's a language with good profane possibilities."

If it may seem strange that Nick Carter could laugh under such circumstances, let it be said that it was the way of the detective to enjoy himself when things were coming his way, no matter how great might be his peril.

It was his disposition to see the humorous side even of a very serious situation that accounted for much of his success.

"Marcos!" called out Claudia.

"All right!" responded Nick. "Come along! Look out you don't run us down!"

"Thank Heaven!" she gasped, with unmistakable fervor.

The girl had learned a great deal about the launch even in the short time in which she had been guiding it from shore, and it was with considerable skill that she reduced its speed now, preparatory to running alongside of the two men in the water.

When she had been talking about the resemblance of Nick Carter to Prince Marcos, she had mentioned the fact that their voices were so much alike that it would be easy for one to be mistaken for the other.

Now, when Nick called out to her to come on, in response to her cry of "Marcos!" she supposed it was her cousin calling.

"Here, Marcos!" she said, as she came near. "Climb into the boat. I'll hold it as still as I can."

"I'm afraid we shall have to lift him in, Miss Solado," suggested Nick. "He isn't able to help himself!"

"Oh, Mr. Carter!" she replied. "Is it you I am talking to? But you have my cousin—haven't you?"

"Yes. He's here. But he is not quite as well as he might be. Steady! Keep the boat where it is, and we can get him in. Never mind about that man in the rowboat. He can't get to us in time. Let him blow."

The gruff-voiced man had never ceased his torrent of profanity and threats. They came rumbling across the water as violently as ever. In fact, they increased now that he saw there was a boat by the side of the swimmer and his charge.

"Stop, Marcos!" he bawled. "You'd better, if you know what is to your advantage. We won't stand any more of this nonsense."

"Let him talk!" said Nick Carter, in a low tone, to the girl. "Can you get hold of Marcos' shoulder? That's right! Catch him by the coat lapel and pull, just as I give him a heave!"

"Oh! We must save him!" panted the girl. "But you, Mr. Carter! What will you do if——"

"Never mind about me. Up with him!"

It was with an almost superhuman effort that the detective managed to get the upper part of Prince Marcos across the gunwale of the launch.

Fortunately, the craft was strong and firm in the water, so that it did not tip much.

"Can you push a little more, Mr. Carter?"

"I'll try!"

Getting underneath the unconscious Marcos, Nick gave another tremendous heave. Claudia pulled with all her strength at the same moment, and the helpless man lay across the launch. His legs were hanging over the side, but not enough to drag him out.

"Swing the boat around!" called out Nick. "Put your wheel over to the left as hard as you can! That's right! Make a wide circle! You'll get there all right!"

The girl maneuvered the little craft neatly until it was headed downstream.

Nick saw it with strong approval.

"That's the way! Now put on all the power you can and hustle down to New York! We've fooled them, after all!"

"But, Mr. Carter!" she called out.

"Go ahead!" was all he said. "Get to New York! That's all you have to do!"

Claudia Solado would have liked to stay and pick up the detective. But she was a girl of real sense, and she knew better than to fly in the face of a man who had saved her cousin against almost overwhelming odds.

So she opened the throttle wide, and, with the unconscious Marcos lying across the boat—his head on a mat at her side, and his feet occasionally dipping in the choppy waves as she raced along—she soon left Nick Carter and her pursuers far behind.

She had not gone far, however, before the skiff ran up to where the detective was swimming hard toward the shore.

With an oath the gruff-voiced man seized him by his water-soaked coat collar.

CHAPTER IX.

RASCALITY TRICKED.

"Aha! You didn't get away, after all, did you?" was the fellow's triumphant shout, as he turned the light of his flash light full upon the detective's face. "It's no use, Marcos! You may have things your own way in Joyalita, but you can't do it here."

He tried to drag Nick into the boat. But the light craft had not the steadiness of the launch, and it was evident that if he persisted, there must inevitably be an upset.

"Get in, Marcos!" growled the man. "You can help if you will. No matter what happens, you are better off in the boat than swimming around in that cold river."

"Think so?" jeered Nick.

"Why, yes. Even if you swim to shore, we shall be by your side and catch you as you come out of the water."

"What would be the use of my going with you to the yacht?" demanded Nick. "You would keep me there, and you know I have to be in Joyalita on the eighteenth."

The gruff man gave vent to a loud guffaw.

"That's just what we don't want," he returned. "We are going to keep you till the eighteenth is past. But come on! You may as well argue in the boat as in the water. Better, I should say. It will be more comfortable for you."

Nick Carter acquiesced in this opinion. He saw that he had been mistaken for Prince Marcos, and it occurred to him that it would be well to keep up the deception for a short time—at least till Marcos had got away for his own country.

After that he would let these scoundrels know who he was, and enjoy a laugh at their discomfiture.

"Give me your hand!" he called out.

The other man clutched him firmly by the hand and wrist. With a spring, Nick Carter raised himself in the water, and landed in the boat, neck and heels, but without capsizing.

The detective had noticed that Marcos' clothes were a dark business suit, so much like his own that only a very close observer would detect the difference.

When they were soaked in water, it would be impossible to tell one from the other unless the observer were very familiar with the pattern and cut of both.

"Well, Marcos!" began the gruff man, as the oarsman turned the boat around, with the assistance of the sailor who was steering, "I hope you are convinced that it is useless for you to try and get away from us."

"I nearly did it that time," rejoined Nick.

"Not at all. You came near to being drowned. That's all. If that fellow, whoever he was, hadn't seen you struggling in the water and gone after you, there would have been an end of Prince Marcos, and the people in Joyalita never would have known what had become of you."

"You wouldn't want that, would you?" asked Nick.

"Oh, I don't know that it would have been so very bad for me," was the slow reply. "I wouldn't kill you, of course. I am not an assassin. But if you were to die accidentally, who would be the heir to the throne but your humble servant and cousin, Prince Miguel?"

"Prince Miguel!" thought Nick. "I suspected as much. Well, I'll have something to say to Prince Miguel in New York if he doesn't behave himself."

Miguel was looking at him by the light of his flash light, shaking his head with an amused smile.

"You are very wet, my cousin," he broke out, after a short pause. "Who was that person who tried to get you out of the water and whom you put on that launch?"

"How should I know?"

"A stranger, eh?"

"What else would he be?" demanded Nick. "Do you suppose I know anybody up here?"

"There was a lady in the launch," went on Miguel. "She seemed to be much interested in you."

"Probably a friend of the man who tried to save me from drowning," suggested the detective.

"Ah! Very likely! She got away in a great hurry when once she had the man aboard. He looked as if he were in worse condition than you."

"He was."

"So that the rescuer became the rescued, eh? That was funny. Still, you have always been a good swimmer, and I never knew the time when you could not hold your own in athletic sports generally. It is a pity you are so obstinate with it all."

Nick Carter did not reply. They were by the side of the yacht now, for the distance back had been much less than that covered in rowing from it, when a large curve had been described in the river.

Several men were on deck, and there were half a dozen lights flitting about.

Down one side of the yacht to the water was a short ladder—brass mounted and finely finished, like everything else about the vessel.

"Hello! You got him, then?"

A man in ordinary clothing stood at the gangway looking down at the boat.

"Yes, Solado!" returned Miguel. "We have him!"

"Glad he wasn't drowned."

Nick Carter was sure he could make out, in the way this was said, that the speaker's sentiments were just the opposite to those he expressed.

"Well, he was nearly drowned," replied Miguel. "Some stranger went after him with a small boat, and it tipped over. After that the two of them were nearly gone."

"What saved them?"

"A launch came along, with a woman in it, and the other man was shoved into it. Marcos was just going to follow when I begged him to come with me. With his usual complaisance, he did what I asked."

The two rascals indulged in a duet of laughter over this. They little thought that the supposed Prince Marcos was enjoying a joke of much finer texture than their own.

Once on the yacht, the supposed Marcos was shown into a stateroom, where a man who seemed to be the personal servant of Miguel, or Don Solado, or perhaps of both, pointed respectfully to a complete outfit of clothing lying on the bed and chairs.

Nick was glad to see that clean underwear, as well as white shirt, collar, necktie, et cetera, were all included.

"The bathroom adjoins, sir, as you know," said the man softly. "I have prepared the water about as you like it. If it is too hot or cold, and you would like me to change it, will you kindly touch the bell?"

"If there are faucets at the bathtub, I can change it myself if necessary. Let me see, your name is——"

"Jean, sir!"

"Ah, yes! Jean!" repeated the detective. "Well, that is all at present. I will remember the bell if I want you."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

Jean went out of the stateroom, and Nick Carter heard the key turn in the lock.

"Jean is polite—almost servile, in fact," muttered Nick Carter. "But he does not forget that I'm a prisoner. Well, this is an amusing affair. I never expected it to come out this way. However, so long as Marcos gets back to Joyalita, I guess I can attend to my friends on board the yacht."

He had been taking off his wet clothing while reflecting thus, and now carefully transferred all his personal property to the pockets of the dry suit he intended to put on.

There was an automatic pistol, which, in its waterproof case, was quite unharmed by its plunge into the river. Also, Nick brought out his pocketknife, with its many useful tools packed in the handle, his waterproof wallet well supplied with bank notes, and several other articles that he always carried. Among them was a pair of nickel-plated handcuffs, very light, but as strong as the heaviest kind made.

"I don't suppose I shall have to use them," he muttered, as he stepped into the bathroom, and found the water in the tub was just as he liked it—cold, but with the raw chill taken off. "Still if there should be too much trouble with my friends aboard, I should not hesitate to slip them on."

No one came near him as he enjoyed his bath, and afterward dressed carefully in the clothes that had been prepared for him.

"I'm not such a bad-looking prince," he said to him-

self, with a smile, as he looked at himself in the mirror. "These garments are the kind you buy in New York. Yet, somehow, knowing they belong to a prince, I fancy I detect an odor of royalty about them."

He laughed at his own conceit. Then, finding that a box of cigars, of a well-known brand, was in a little cupboard at one side of the stateroom, he selected one and nipped off the end.

"It is possible these cigars are drugged," he muttered. "But I don't think so. Anyhow, it is so long since I had a smoke, that I shall have to take the risk."

He puffed away comfortably for more than a quarter of an hour, deep in his own thoughts, as he sat in one of the two chairs in the cabin, and was beginning to think he would not be disturbed till morning, when there came a tap at the door.

"Considering they have me locked in, I don't see that they can expect me to open the door to see who is there," he said to himself, with a smile. Then, aloud, he called: "Come in!"

There was the faint grating of a lock, and the door opened. It was Don Solado who entered.

"Well, Marcos! I thought I'd come in and see how you are after your swim in the river," began Solado.

"Hadn't you better lock the door?" suggested Nick, with a mocking smile. "You shouldn't tempt me."

"There's no fear of your getting away, if that's what you mean," was the comfortable rejoinder. "You wouldn't want to swim again, I'm sure, and you couldn't leave us even that way, for we have men watching the whole deck."

"Yet, to get to Joyalita by the eighteenth is so important to me, that I don't know that I should hesitate to swim if it would get me there by that time."

"Why do you want to get to Joyalita by the eighteenth?" suddenly demanded Solado, in a different tone, as he leaned forward to look closely into the detective's face. "What is Joyalita to you?"

"What do you mean?"

"What do I mean?" broke out Don Solado, so savagely that his tone became almost a shriek. "What do I mean? Why, I mean that you are a fraud!"

"A fraud?" asked Nick Carter composedly. "In what way am I one?"

"You say your name is Marcos—Prince Marcos?" howled Solado.

"Do I say so? I don't remember saying anything of the kind. Still, you know me, don't you?"

"Yes, I do know you! Curse you! I thought there was something wrong about you as they brought you on the yacht a little while ago. That's why I came down here to look at you again, and particularly to hear you speak. Now I know you are an impostor!"

"Who do you think I am, then?" asked Nick.

"I don't know who you are, except that I believe you are the man who assaulted me at the Hotel Supremacy a few nights ago."

"You were assaulted there, then?"

The coolness with which the detective asked this question evidently increased the rage of the other, and he snorted inarticulately.

"It was I who assaulted you—most likely," went on Nick Carter. "I was obliged to teach a lesson to a masked man there, because he attacked me. I am pleased to meet you again, under more peaceful conditions."

"You'll find they are not so peaceful, perhaps!"

Don Solado's tones had risen to a shriek again, and he shook his fist at the quietly smoking detective.

"Don't do that," advised Nick calmly. "It annoys me."

"I'll do what I please. I don't know who you are, but I know you are not Prince Marcos!"

"Well? And then?"

"You have helped him to escape. Now escape yourself—if you can!"

As Solado shouted this last sentence, he jumped up and flung himself out of the door.

It closed with a bang, and Nick heard the lock turn.

CHAPTER X.

CHICK REPORTS PROGRESS.

For five minutes after the departure of the infuriated Don Solado, the detective remained in his seat, smoking and pondering.

He might have got to the door before Solado if he had tried, and for a fleeting moment he had some such idea. Then he decided that it would have been premature, and might have interfered with a plan he had been forming during the latter part of the interview.

"If they go after Marcos at once, they may catch him," he thought. "It isn't likely but they might. Let them stew over it a while."

Nick Carter knew that Marcos would have plenty of money for his traveling expenses, and that Claudia Solado would help him in every possible way.

"Whether that young lady is in love with Marcos, or whether it is merely cousinly regard she feels for him, is of no consequence," he murmured. "The point is that she seems to be entirely devoted to the young man. I hope they won't be so foolish as to stop long at Crownledge. That is not a safe place for him just now."

He decided in his own mind that Claudia was too sensible to let her cousin get into a trap again in a hurry.

"She may take him to her own home, on the other side of the river," he reflected. "Of course Don Solado knows where she lives, but, unless he suspects his niece of helping Marcos, he never would think of looking for him there."

It was characteristic of the famous detective that he was troubled only about Marcos, and thought little of his own predicament.

One thing was that he knew he was on the Hudson River, in a neighborhood where there was plenty of traffic, both afloat and ashore, especially in daylight. If the worst came, he would be able to attract the attention of somebody on passing craft and get released that way.

There was a good-sized window to his stateroom, overlooking the deck and the water. It was secured by iron bars, so that he could not escape that way, although no doubt the bars had been built in to keep marauders out, instead of the occupant in.

Occasionally he had seen one of the crew pass by. But no one looked in his direction. They had had their orders, no doubt.

It was late now, and for the last ten minutes that he had been sitting by the open window, letting the smoke from his cigar go through, he had not seen anybody.

Neither had there been any sounds in the saloon or the other staterooms. It was clear to Nick that Solado and Miguel had both gone to bed, satisfied that nothing could be done to-night to catch Marcos—if they had any such intention.

"I am glad it is so," thought Nick Carter. "By the morning I shall have my plans ready to work. I don't want to be disturbed any more now."

He switched off the two electric lights in his cabin, and resumed his seat by the window in the dark. He was not ready to go to bed yet.

It was getting to the still hour for the morning when everything seems dead, preparatory to bursting into life a little later by another day of activity.

A few lights twinkled here and there on the water or along the shores. But, aside from them, there was nothing to suggest that many thousands of people were within sound of his voice if he should shout aloud, while a few miles down the river a metropolis of four or five millions lay slumbering.

He got up and went to the door to examine the lock.

"Easy!" he murmured. "I know the locks on boats of this kind. They are supposed to be so safe that they are more vulnerable than those which have not such a reputation. I'll get out of this room when the time comes. But that is not just yet."

He went back to the window and again looked out.

It was more than an hour later when he fixed his gaze on something that looked like the shadow of a wave a little way off.

"A boat, and hanging about, looking at what there is here," was his inward comment. "If I hadn't good eyes, I doubt whether I could have seen that. It's coming nearer to the yacht. I wonder—— There will be no harm in trying. I don't suppose any one will notice it. If they do, what matters?"

He put his face close to the window and whistled part of the refrain of the popular melody, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary!"

The whistle was like that of a man who is not thinking much of what he is doing, but it had a penetrating quality which is not often heard in that sort of music.

Members of Nick Carter's household all declared that they would know his whistle whenever they heard it, no matter what tune it might give forth—or even no tune at all.

The detective was testing the truth of this assertion at this moment.

There was short pause as he finished the line of "Tipperary," and then, in answer, came another part of the melody, taking it up where he had left off.

The person whistling in response was somebody that Nick Carter could swear to. He smiled gently in the darkness.

"Chick, by all that's lucky!" he muttered. "He's in that boat, and he knows I'm here. Well, that means I must get out of this stateroom without loss of time."

He whistled again, but shut off in the middle of a measure. This was a code signal between them, meaning "Wait!"

Quite well assured that Chick would wait till he heard again from his chief, and that he would contrive to keep out of sight of any watchers who might be on the yacht, Nick went to the door, a small wire in his fingers.

It was with this wire that he intended to open the door, and in a few minutes he had proved that he could carry out his intention. The lock shot back with a faint click, and there was nothing to prevent his opening the door when ready.

He stood just inside and listened intently for at least two minutes. Then he turned the handle softly and looked out into the corridor.

It was empty.

One electric light cast a dim light from end to end. It showed Nick the way to the outer door.

There was a short flight of brass-bound steps and a heavy door. Beyond was the deck.

What would he meet when he opened that door? That was the question he asked himself, as he took his automatic pistol from its waterproof case, and made sure it was charged with cartridges, ready for action.

The mocking smile which had been on his face during the interview with Don Solado, and which had not quite faded as he sat in the darkness, was gone entirely now. Stern business was the expression—that and nothing else.

On the deck he met nobody. He was overlooking the taffrail. In the shadows beyond he made out the boat in which sat his assistant.

Nick whistled another line of "Tipperary," and at the same time sent a short flash of light from his pocket electric lamp in the direction of the small boat.

There was immediate response in the shooting forward of the boat until it was directly below where Nick stood leaning on the rail, looking down at the water.

The detective had not been idle during the approach of Chick's boat. He had found a coil of light rope and fastened one end to the rail. The other dropped to the water.

"Chick?" he whispered.

"That's who it is, chief!" was the prompt reply. "What shall I do? Come up?"

"Yes. But first make sure your boat won't get away. Make it fast to a rudder chain."

It took Chick only a fraction of a minute to do this. Then he seized the line and gave it a tug to test its strength.

"It will hold you all right," whispered Nick. "Come on!"

Chick could climb like a monkey, and in a remarkably short space of time he was by the side of his chief.

The two shook hands with the silent earnestness of men who had often been in peril together, and who knew that each could depend on the other.

"Well?" asked Nick. "How are things at Crownledge?"

"Marcos is there."

"Is he? I'm sorry to hear that," returned Nick. "That's where these fellows are liable to look for him. I didn't think he'd venture there."

"That's all right," was Chick's confident rejoinder. "He's got enough people there to hold off any kind of gang. Besides, he isn't going to stay. He'll be gone before daylight. Probably he is away now."

"I hope he is. It has been a narrow tug for all of us. How did you get up here so quickly, and who told you I was here?"

"That peach, Miss Solado. She was with Marcos, and she told me in a few minutes all that had happened up here."

"Well?"

"I borrowed the launch from her, and, believe me, I made that gas barge hustle up the river. I got everything out of her that was in her engine."

"I didn't hear it. How was that?" asked Nick, in a slightly mystified tone.

"That was easy," grinned Chick. "I had a skiff trailing behind, and when I got pretty close to the yacht, but still too far away for the launch to be heard plainly, I tied up and came on with the oars. They're muffled, so you did not hear even them."

"We can get to the launch without trouble, I suppose?"

"Unless the bottom of the skiff falls out," returned Chick, with a laugh. "Now, what have we to do?"

"Just this, Chick," answered Nick Carter sternly: "I am going to take those two rascals off the yacht and hold them till I know Marcos is out of the country. You and I have to do it now."

The difficulty of this enterprise seemed not to strike Chick. He merely answered "All right!" and looked at his chief for further instructions.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT THEY ALL SAY.

"The crew are all forward," explained Nick, in low tones, as the two kept well in the shadow of the cabin, where they could look along the deck. "It won't be difficult if we are careful. I know the layout of this yacht very well. It belongs to Judge Millings, and it has been leased to these people for two months."

"I didn't know that," admitted Chick.

"You could have found it out if you had made inquiries, as I did," answered Nick quietly. "We can get to the cabins of these two men and open them very easily, without disturbing anybody else. We'll have to gag and bind them. But we can tackle each one separately, so it won't be hard to do."

"That sounds all right. Are we to begin the job now?"

"Yes. There is nothing to wait for. We'll get Solado first, because his stateroom is nearest to the companionway."

Nick led the way to a corridor on the other side of the boat from the one that communicated with the cabin he had occupied, and which he had locked when he came out, in case there should be any one prying about.

"Here's the door, Chick. I'll open it."

Softly and skillfully, Nick Carter introduced his wire and turned the lock.

He stepped inside, closely followed by Chick, both walking on their tiptoes, and without the least noise.

It was quite dark. But the detective knew where the bed was, and he moved over to it without hesitation. Then he uttered a low exclamation of surprise.

The bed was empty!

"Hurry, Chick! Let's get out of this! There's something going to happen. They've found out that I have got away!"

"Where's the other cabin?"

"Farther along! Let me see!"

Nick rushed forward. He was not astonished when he found that the other cabin was not only unoccupied, but that the door was unlocked and partly open.

"Let's get out, Chick! I guess the whole yacht is on the qui vive! The rascals have laid a trap for us."

"Do you think they know I am aboard?"

"I hope not! That will give us an advantage if we can surprise them by being two, instead of one. Come on!"

Nick led the way to the short flight of steps leading to the big door that gave upon the deck.

As he had expected, the door was fastened. The only bolt was inside. But there was a lock that could be operated either without or within.

"The lock is nothing, Chick! We can burst that!" whispered Nick. "Now! Together!"

The two hurled all their weight against the door. The lock broke away, and Nick Carter found himself in the arms of Prince Miguel, the bigger of the two ruffians.

There was a desperate struggle for a few minutes, and then Jean, the valet who had been attending Nick when he came aboard—showing him his dry clothing and explaining to him that his bath was ready—tried to help his master.

It happened that Nick was held in such a way that his left arm was free. He sent a swing at the valet that knocked him spinning down the deck, where he lay without movement.

The sailors at the other end of the yacht had not been told of what was to take place.

As Nick had said, the yacht was hired for two months from the multimillionaire, Judge Millings, and all the crew went with the vessel. It was not likely the sailors belonging to the yacht would take a hand in anything that looked too bad.

"Don't you suppose they knew Marcos was a prisoner?" Chick had asked.

"Not likely. Marcos was allowed to go about the yacht as he chose. We have proof of that in the fact that he attacked Miguel when he was sitting on the deck, smoking. They relied on there being no boats handy, and on the watchfulness of that scoundrelly valet, Jean, who was really his guard, I should judge."

Now that there was a quiet, but strenuous battle on, the crew were in blissful ignorance. Miguel and Solado had thought they were quite capable of holding Nick Carter until they should be ready to take him to some place ashore.

They were finding their mistake, for, as Nick sent the valet flying to the deck, senseless, Chick flew at Solado just when that worthy was going to help Miguel.

"You may be a big man in your own country," observed Chick, as he twisted Don Solado's arms behind him until he gasped with pain. "But in America we have better men than you in jail."

He forced Solado to his back on the deck, and then slipped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists.

This had been swift work with Chick. But Nick Carter had been equally as speedy.

Miguel had been taken very much aback when he saw Jean going to the deck, and the detective had taken instant advantage of this fact to jam him against the taffrail and put on him the light, but powerful, nickel-plated handcuffs referred to in a previous chapter.

"Now, are you going to come quietly, or shall we have to wake up the crew and tell them you are a couple of rascals the police are after?" asked Nick Carter sternly.

"You shall pay for this?" hissed Solado.

"We shan't pay as much as you will," was the detective's rejoinder.

"Keep quiet, Solado!" warned Miguel.

"Are you going to let them do what they want?" growled Solado.

"Yes."

There was something in the way this word "Yes" was uttered that put Nick Carter on his guard.

He made no comment, however. Instead, he directed Chick to open the gangway where the ladder led down to the water, and then to go down by the rope to the skiff and bring it around.

"I will take care of the prisoners while you do it," added Nick.

"Prisoners?" echoed Miguel indignantly. "Do you know who we are?"

"I know you have tried to kidnap the Prince of Joyalita, and that I got him away from you."

"Well, what have you to do with the affairs of Joyalita?"

"Nothing. But I have something to do with sustaining the laws of the United States," was Nick Carter's swift rejoinder. "You can't kidnap people here without being compelled to suffer for it."

"But how is it any business of yours? You are not a policeman."

"I am a detective," answered Nick briefly, as he looked over the rail to see that Chick was bringing the boat around. "That is a policeman, I believe."

"A detective, eh?" put in Don Solado sneeringly. "I don't believe it. What is your name?"

"My name is Nicholas Carter."

The two scoundrels stiffened as they heard that dreaded name. It was evident that they never had suspected that they were dealing with a man who had once brought two criminals from the very borders of Joyalita back to New York to answer to a charge of piracy they had committed near Sandy Hook.

Don Solado struggled to regain his composure.

"Even if you are Nicholas Carter, that gives you no right to treat us in this way," he barked. "Who gave you authority to put handcuffs on us?"

"I took that on myself," replied Nick. "Here's the boat at the foot of the ladder. Come on! I'll explain to the crew in the morning where you are."

"I'll not go!" roared Solado. "This is an outrage. It is not as if either of us had committed a crime. You can't prove that we kidnaped any one."

"Can't I?" cried Nick Carter. "I believe I can. Anyhow, there is something else you will be called on to explain, that may get you into an American jail, in spite of the titles you wear in your own country."

"What is that? What are you talking about now?"

"I am talking about a very valuable jeweled watch that you took from Prince Marcos without his knowledge, and that you lost at the ball at the Hotel Supremacy."

The two rascals glanced at each other in the dim light of the dawn that now showed itself, and the detective saw that they were trembling.

"What do you know about such a watch?" demanded Miguel.

"I know that you had it, and lost it. I also know that Don Solado went to see Mrs. van Raikes, the hostess at that ball, and confessed to her that the watch was lost."

"Well, where is the crime, even if what you say is true?" blustered Don Solado.

"It consists in the fact that you stole it from Prince Marcos——"

"What rubbish!" interrupted Miguel. "Is it likely I would condescend to such a contemptible crime as picking a pocket?"

"I don't know anything about that," returned Nick. "But I do know you took the watch. Moreover, I know where it is now. It will be brought up in evidence against you if necessary."

"Where is the watch?" asked Solado.

"In the possession of Prince Marcos."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Quite."

"Then there is nothing in that to warrant your making us prisoners," retorted Solado triumphantly.

"We'll see about that later," answered Nick. "The charge of abduction will do for the present. Ready, Chick?"

"All ready!" replied Chick, from below.

"Come on, gentlemen!" said Nick, leading his two prisoners to the gangway.

They looked around, as if to seek some avenue of escape. Then, giving it up, they went down the ladder and seated themselves in the stern of the skiff, as Chick directed.

"Throw your gun on them, Chick!" called out Nick Carter. "I want to speak to one of the gentlemen of the crew before I go. Shoot, if either of those men gets too obstreperous."

In the absence of the captain and first mate, the second mate had been left in charge of the yacht.

The second mate had been in his stateroom, and so little noise had been made by Nick Carter and Chick in making the two temporary owners prisoner that he had not been disturbed till the door was broken open.

Even then he had not got up at once.

He was an honest, heavy-headed sort of man, who was a good-enough sailor, but afflicted with an abnormal love of sleep when once he got to his bed.

The fact that he could keep on deck forty-eight hours at a stretch if required—as he had done on one occasion when fighting a tearing gale in an old-fashioned windjammer in the China trade—did not interfere with his ability to sleep almost as long when there was no demand upon him.

"These gentlemen are going with me, Mr. Jarvis," said Nick politely. "I am Nicholas Carter. You know me, I think, for I recognize you."

"Of course I know you, Mr. Carter. You sailed with me to the South once for more than a week. I don't forget any one I've once known. What is all this about? I'll have to tell the captain, you know."

"Say they went away with me," answered Nick. "I'll see the captain when he comes to New York next week. I know where he always puts up in town. Good night, Mr. Jarvis."

"Good night, Mr. Carter! Good luck!" returned the worthy second mate.

He watched the skiff row away, with Chick at the oars, and then, with a yawn, returned to his bunk.

"It's a funny thing, those two gentlemen going away like this," he muttered.

A moment later he noticed the valet lying along the

deck, and in a scandalized tone he ordered one of his men to "wake up that souse there."

They found Jean was not much hurt. When he had been doused with water outwardly, and warmed up within with a serving of grog, he was as good as new, according to the seafaring men who fixed him up.

"I'll go ashore later," decided Jean.

Then he went to bed, regardless, in his still-dazed condition, of what had become of his employer.

"Are you going to take these fellows to the Tombs, chief?" asked Chick, as they transferred to the launch and went rushing down the river toward the city, with Nick Carter at the wheel. "Or is it a police station we want?"

"Police headquarters," was Nick's reply. "I think a little third degree will help matters materially."

"You shall pay for this, Mr. Nicholas Carter!" hissed Don Solado.

"That's what they all say," returned the detective, with a shrug.

THE END.

"The Seal of Gijon; or, Nick Carter's Ice-house Fight," will be found in the next issue of the NICK CARTER STORIES, No. 137, out April 24th. The further adventures of the great detective with the potentates of Joyalita are given in the forthcoming number.

Dared for Los Angeles.

By ROLAND ASHFORD PHILLIPS.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 134 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XII.

THE UNEXPECTED.

Elliot Nash was puzzled, the morning following, when Hooker came to the shack and said that Sigsbee wished him to call at his office. Nothing was said concerning the previous night's adventure, and while Nash was eager for an understanding, he determined to wait until after the interview with the Los Angeles politician.

He reached San Fernando at noon, and the local train set him down at the Fifth Street Station, Los Angeles, shortly after one o'clock. After the few months' absence, the city appealed strongly to the engineer, and he spent all of an hour walking slowly in Broadway, Main, and Spring Streets, looking into the store windows, enjoying the scene of the hurrying throngs of shoppers, and amused or amazed now and then at the volley of questions fired at him by the curious, excited tourists.

The big restaurants were filled, and always in front of them stood a group of thrifty strangers, studying the bill of fare posted in the windows, and trying to decide what to order, and just what it would cost, before venturing inside.

Nash was more than interested in the types around him, who made the Los Angeles streets as lively and colorful as those of some foreign city. Here came a bevy of chattering, laughing girls, probably residents, all in white, with glowing complexions; jostling elbows with them, a Japanese family would wend their way, dressed in fashionable clothes, and carrying themselves with an air of importance—the City of Angels has many Japanese millionaires. Here and there a Spanish landowner one of the real settlers of southern California, who still frown upon the "gringos," as they style the Americans, swarthy of face, erect of figure, strutted past like a soldier on parade. Quaint Mexican women, bareheaded, barefooted, garbed in loose gowns of brilliant coloring, stepped in and out, following their lords and masters—thin-faced, evil-eyed, cigarette-smoking "greasers" in grimy linen suits and wearing huge, silver-trimmed, and costly sombreros—in most cases, more hat than man.

Shy, unsociable Chinese; stolid-faced men, dainty women, and big-eyed, beautiful children, all in gorgeous, flowing garments, pattered noiselessly through the crowd, apparently unconscious of the staring and remarks made by the gaping farmer from Iowa, who, with his wife and family, had spent his savings for a few glorious months in this California paradise.

Nash strolled aimlessly down Spring Street, and went into the Big Alexandria Hotel, and on through the crowded lobby to the grill. Here he ordered lunch, and enjoyed every morsel. It was nearly half an hour past the appointed time when he presented himself to the stenographer who guarded the inner offices of Mr. J. Sigsbee, in the big Equitable Bank Building. Sigsbee, while serving the city on the aqueduct construction, was interested in a large law firm.

When Nash found himself in the presence of Sigsbee, and discovered him to be none other than the man he had been refused an introduction to the previous night at Camp Forty-seven, he knew that, instead of clearing the problem was becoming more intricate.

His first impression of Jim Sigsbee was far from an agreeable one, although he was taken aback at the pleasant manner with which the politician greeted him. He imagined that the first thing Sigsbee would do would be to mention something of last night's meeting. But in this he was disappointed.

"I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Nash," he said frankly, extending his hand and smiling. "Please sit down."

Sigsbee cleared away the papers from his desk, and gave orders to the girl in the outer office that he was not to be disturbed.

"Mr. Nash," he began, swinging around in his chair, "I am a blunt man, and when I approach a subject I strike for the heart at the first blow. I have asked you here to talk over certain matters that have come to my notice. As one of the aqueduct board, these affairs interest me strongly. I have been elected to this board by the honest votes of the Los Angeles citizens, and I intend to do my duty toward them. You have found certain irregularities on foot in Camp Forty-seven. I want to compliment you, Mr. Nash. Men of your caliber are the men we desire on the great undertaking. I am not going to deny these irregularities, but I intend putting a stop to them *immediately*. Mr. Hooker, the foreman, is, in a measure, responsible. I have relieved him of the foremanship. The position is open to you. Will you accept?"

Nash did not attempt to mask his surprise.

"You wish me to take Mr. Hooker's place?" he asked.

"Exactly. Hooker has proven himself to be unreliable. Camp Forty-seven is a most important station

It must be commanded by an upright, fearless man. I think you measure up to that standard, Mr. Nash."

"This is a big proposition, and a sudden one," Nash said. "But—well, if you will allow me to run the camp according to my ideas, I'll accept."

Sigsbee smiled and nodded vigorously. "Good! That's the spirit I like to see. Since the beginning, I have interested myself in this particular camp, because I have been awarded a small steel contract. I want you to assume full charge and accept all the responsbility. Can I depend upon you?"

"You can, Mr. Sigsbee," Nash answered. "You may hold me directly responsible for all matters of which I have charge. I believe that is one of the specifications in all the contract work, isn't it?"

"Yes. Each foreman is supreme. To him is given all the praise, and likewise all the blame."

"When will you want me to begin?"

"Right away—to-morrow."

"That is agreeable to me."

"Very well." Sigsbee turned back his chair. "I will notify the aqueduct board at its next meeting—that is Monday. Your orders will come through me."

"I shall obey them to the letter."

"I'm sure of that," said the politician, rising. "And let our motto be 'All for Los Angeles.'" He accompanied the engineer to the outer office. "Will you step down and have a drink before going?"

Nash asked to be excused, to the other's surprise. "Don't indulge, eh? Not even one?"

"I've a lot of work ahead of me," said Nash. "It'll need a clear head. Thank you just the same."

"You'll smoke, won't you?"

Sigsbee held out a cigar. Nash accepted it, and thanked him. He enjoyed a good cigar. Once down on the busy street, he lighted the weed, and walked slowly down to Fifth, and along this thoroughfare to the station. He was so busy with his own thoughts that he paid scant attention to what went on around him. So much had happened within the past twenty-four hours that it was small wonder he appeared preoccupied.

A hundred unanswered questions pounded at his brain; no sooner did he try to reason out one than a dozen rushed in. So, with a shrug of his shoulders, he resolved to give it all up and allow the problems to wag for a while.

"I've enough to do in minding my own affairs," he told himself. "The other things will solve themselves."

He reached the station just in time to catch a train back to San Fernando. He swung up on the last car, and made his way into the smoker. With a sigh of relief, he sank into the nearest seat.

"Well, there's one thing certain," he said, addressing the endless orange groves that stretched on either side of the track. "And that is, Camp Forty-seven is going to be heard from, and in the right way, for work accomplished and the cost of it."

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE HIGH TRAIL.

The installation of the new foreman at Camp Forty-seven provoked no little discussion, not alone in the camp concerned, but all along the busy line of aqueduct construction. It was the abruptness of the affair which probably affected the majority of the workers, and a dozen different stories were in circulation as to the real cause of the change.

Doubtlessly the men arrived at as satisfactory a conclusion as did Nash himself. While he had no great respect for the Los Angeles politician—Sigsbee—still Nash admired him for the apparent determination he had expressed in their interview that day—a determination to rid Camp Forty-seven of graft.

Whether this was Sigsbee's object or not, or his main reason, for changing foremen, Nash speedily took matters into his own hands and put his ideas into execution. He studied out a system, held weekly consultations with his subforemen, and saw to it that they followed the lines he had drawn. There was considerable grumbling at first, principally because each man had been in the habit of doing what he pleased.

"That's why you don't accomplish more," Nash told them 'You don't pull together. Teamwork is the thing that counts."

Gradually he gained his ends, and as gradually the work on the aqueduct allotted to his camp showed improvement. Never before had Nash worked so earnestly and with so much confidence. He felt as if on his shoulders alone rested the success or the failure of this wonderful waterway. He instilled the same fervor, the same enthusiasm, into the work of those under him, and soon the complaining wore away, and every man of them entered into the struggle with that supreme, indomitable spirit that recognizes no such word as failure.

One blistering hot afternoon, when he was riding slowly over the high trail that led from the main road to the camp, Nash heard the wild gallop of hoofs behind him. Before he could turn, a frightened horse dashed past, careening madly down the path, threatening each second to topple into the ravine below.

Nash drew rein. "That horse was saddled," he said aloud. "I wonder if there's been an accident?"

He struck his pony sharply, and descended the trail. Half a mile on he stopped, uttered an exclamation, leaped from his saddle, and knelt beside the quiet form of a woman. She was lying in a matted clump of scrub oak, where the horse had probably thrown her.

Carefully he drew an arm away from her face. There was a cut above her closed eyes, and the crimson had run down over her cheek, staining the lace on her collar. She seemed so quiet, so very white, that for the instant Nash believed she was dead. It was only when he took his handkerchief and wiped her forehead that she sighed and allowed her eyes to flutter open.

"Just in time," he said encouragingly. "Not hurt much, I hope?"

She seemed conscious suddenly of where she was, and of what had happened. She sat up and passed a limp hand across her eyes.

"I—I guess not," she faltered unsteadily. "My horse threw me. I—I remember falling, and then——"

"Your forehead's cut," Nash said; "not very deep, though. You've this brush here to thank for your escape. If you had fallen to these rocks, there would have been real damage."

He helped her up. She was a trifle dizzy at first, but it soon wore away. She allowed him to bind his handkerchief about her head.

"There!" he said, finishing with the improvised bandage. "That will keep the dust out. Do you live near here?"

She nodded. "Over at the Elkhorn Ranch."

"I should advise you to get back as quickly as you can," he told her. "Have the wound washed and dressed. I don't think there's a drop of water this side of the camp."

"Oh," she said, turning quickly to face him, "you're from the construction camp, then?"

"Yes, from Forty-seven, about two miles down the trail. I was just going back when your horse dashed past me."

Her eyes were shining now, and a quick color had rushed to her cheeks. Nash told himself that it had been a long time since he had seen a prettier girl. He reasoned quickly, by the hue of her skin, that she was a stranger to this part of southern California.

"You haven't been here long, have you?" he said.

She shook her head. "No. This is my first day at the ranch. I'm visiting friends there." She hesitated a moment, and looked frankly into his bronzed face. "How did you guess?"

He laughed. "Why, this sun will leave its mark on you. It's the champion long-distance artist. You'll soon change that New York white for California copper."

She stared at him bewilderedly. "How did you know I was from New York?" she asked.

"Well," he admitted, "I haven't been away from there long myself. I thought you were from the East by your accent."

"You're a regular fortune teller," she replied, smiling; and he laughed.

"Now, you take my pony and ride along to the ranch," he said. "It's only a short walk for me—by cutting across the hill yonder. You can return the mount tomorrow, or any time convenient. Meanwhile, I'll keep an eye out for your horse."

She demurred at first, but Nash insisted; so it ended by the girl being helped into the saddle.

"I'm so interested in this—this aqueduct," she said, after he had finished looking over the saddle straps.

"Then you must come over to the camp—any day—and I'll show you around," he said. "I am always glad to interest myself in others who are interested in what I'm doing."

"Are you—the—boss?" she asked.

"I'm the foreman," he answered. "Naturally I take a great deal of pride in the work of construction."

For the instant, as he looked at her, he fancied he detected a new light—a cold, different light—come into her eyes; and he could have sworn her hands were trembling as they rested on the pony's neck.

"Then—then you are Mr. Nash?" she said presently.

He nodded. "That's an excellent guess."

Her fingers found and gripped the reins, and, as if composing herself, she straightened in the saddle.

"I—I will return your pony promptly, Mr. Nash," she said, in a voice that seemed to issue from strange lips. "And thank you very much for what you have done."

With a puzzled frown, Nash watched her as she galloped up the trail and disappeared from view behind a shoulder of rock, riding her mount with the ease of an experienced horsewoman.

"She's no beginner when it comes to the saddle," Nash muttered. "Elkhorn Ranch, eh?" he said, a moment later. "Odd I never heard of it before."

Then he turned on his heel and wended his way down the rough slope, deserting the trail for the cut-off in the direction of the camp.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NIGHT ALARM.

Before he was halfway to his cabin he came upon the runaway horse, peacefully cropping the grass in a little hollow between the high hills. It was but the work of a moment to catch it, and, after satisfying himself that the animal was free from injuries, Nash adjusted the saddle and sprang into it.

Arrived at the camp, he turned the horse into the stable where the others were kept, but concluded then to take the saddle up to the cabin, where it would be safer.

Finishing with supper and lighting the lamp in the big room of the cabin, which he used as an office, Nash noticed a piece of paper in the middle of the floor. He picked it up and unfolded it. Then he frowned and looked around the room, as if expecting to find the owner watching him. Traced upon the paper was a small but excellent map of the entire Los Angeles Aqueduct route, showing the intake at Owens Lake. The different elevations, the telephone stations were marked in red ink, while the numerous tunnels, beginning with the long one at Elizabeth and ending with the Reever Bore above San Fernando, were denoted by heavy crosses.

Nash studied the map for a long time. "Now, where in the world did this come from?" he muttered. "It's an exceedingly clever drawing." Suddenly he lifted his head and whistled. "By Jove, that's it! It fell from the saddle pocket."

He examined the saddle, which he had dragged to one corner. Sure enough, there was a pocket under one of the flaps. He drew out several other drawings; one of them proved to be an enlarged map of Camp Forty-seven. Under it was written, in pencil, and partly erased:

"I think his name is Elliot Nash. Let me know positively."

The signature was obliterated.

Nash returned the papers to the pocket. Then he went back to his chair before the long table, where some blue prints were unrolled.

"I wonder if those maps belong to the girl, or to the person owning the saddle?" he asked himself. "They're not the kind used by any of the engineering corps. They're prepared especially on the finest kind of paper. And some one has written my name upon one of them." He took in a deep breath, and reached for his pencil. "Well, he mused, "I'll ask the girl—when we're better acquainted."

He was still poring over his figures at ten o'clock, when one the subforemen came hurriedly in with the information that a big water main had burst and threatened to flood out a part of the freshly laid conduit.

"Never heard of such a thing in this weather," Nash said, catching up hat and coat.

"Came all of a sudden," the other announced. "The watchman telephoned in. I've been trying to get you for the past fifteen minutes, but your wire must be out of order."

In ten minutes, Nash, accompanied by the man who had brought the news, was upon the scene. The sight was enough to make his blood boil. Several hundred feet of concrete, laid that day, was washed out. He managed to get the water shut off, and then hurried to inspect the pipe. The bright moonlight proved his first suspicions correct.

"Bring that torch here!" he called to one of the men.

The torch was brought. Nash knelt down and examined the broken length of cast-iron pipe.

"Just as I thought!" he muttered. "It's been smashed—probably with a sledge." He turned to the subforeman. "Where's the regular watchman on this job?"

The man was called and questioned. No additional light was shed upon the case; the watchman had seen no one in the vicinity of the pipe, and the sound of escaping water and falling concrete was his first intimation of anything wrong. Nash felt that the man was telling the truth.

These water mains had been laid long before the actual construction work on the aqueduct had been started; this undertaking, together with the stringing of telephone and electric-light wires—all preliminary to the main project—had cost the city of Los Angeles more than two millions of dollars. Water, to the different construction camps, was a valuable asset, since the great part of the work lay through arid mountains and vast stretches of the Mohave Desert.

While Nash was puzzling over the situation, a shout interrupted, and one of the men came running up with a sledge hammer he had discovered a couple of hundred feet up the slope.

"That's the answer!" exclaimed Nash. "Find the owner of this, and we'll have the man who smashed our pipe."

Before leaving the scene, he spoke again to the subforeman:

"You'd better double your watchmen from now on. We can't afford to take any risks. There's five hundred dollars' worth of a conduit ruined to-night. Tell your men to hold any suspicious strangers they may run across. If necessary, shoot first, and ask questions afterward."

CHAPTER XV.

OUT OF THE SHADOW.

Nash slept little the remainder of the night, for the smashing of the water main and the total destruction of the newly built conduit worried him. Things had been running so smoothly for the past few months that this interruption came as a shock. He did not like to suspect any of his own men of the outrage, yet it seemed impossible that an outsider could elude the watchmen and perpetrate such an act.

Early the following morning he called together all his subforemen, warning them not to allow a stranger within the camp limits unless he showed the proper credentials.

"Without water," he told them, "our construction work cannot go on. We must guard it as we would our lives. Use as many watchmen at night as you think best—better too many than not enough. Now, let's see if we can't nip this thing in the bud. I'm willing to pay a substantial reward for the capture of these culprits."

The men responded eagerly, and Nash felt confident that they would do all in their power to prevent another such outrage.

Late that same afternoon, while at work in his office, Nash was interrupted by a knock on the door.

"Come in!" he shouted.

The door was opened, and the girl of the previous day's adventure stood before him. She was dressed in a khaki riding habit, brown boots, and a wide-brimmed sombrero.

"Oh!" Nash said, smiling. "Pardon my shouting, won't you? I thought it was one of the men. Come right in and sit down."

She thanked him, drawing off her riding gloves, and sinking into the chair he had hurriedly placed for her. "You see, I've kept my promise. Your pony is outside. He's a little beauty—sure-footed as a deer. And mine——"

"I found yours halfway to camp," he answered. "It's in the barn. I'll give orders to have it brought around. Your saddle is here." He pointed to the corner. "I thought it would be safer. Is it your own saddle?" he asked.

"Yes."

He went over to the telephone. So those little maps really belonged to her, he said to himself. What use could she have for such technical drawings? And what was the meaning of his name and the note on one of the drawings?

"Hello!" The barn boss was on the wire. "Send over the horse I brought in last night, will you?" said Nash. "No, only the bridle. The saddle is here. Right away, please."

He hung up the receiver and turned to his visitor.

"I believe you're getting tanned," he said, searching her face critically, thoughtfully.

She laughed. "Really? And in one day? Well, I have to begin some time, don't I? And if I stay at the ranch for six months I suppose I'll be as dark as an Indian."

"Oh, then you're going to be a permanent visitor?"

She nodded. "Shall I be a welcome one?" she ventured.

"At Camp Forty-seven, yes," Nash answered.

"Oh, I'm carried away with this wonderful country!" she exclaimed, her eyes sparkling. "How much I've missed by living all these years in the East! And this aqueduct building is so interesting. You don't realize how I enjoy watching the work. I should have been a man, I guess. I'd really love to get down with the laborers and mix cement."

"Well," Nash returned, in mock seriousness, "perhaps I can give you a job. It would be a novelty for our camp, at least."

They laughed. Presently the girl's horse was brought around to the door.

"Maybe you'd like to take a little inspection trip with me?" he suggested. "I generally make the rounds about this hour."

She gladly assented.

Nash had the saddle adjusted.

"Do you know," he said abruptly, just before helping her into the saddle, "you haven't told me your name?"

"Miss Breen," she told him. "I really should have introduced myself yesterday. I was too upset, I guess."

They jogged along the main street of the camp, and then struck sharply up the winding trail, reaching the

summit of the hill after a ten-minute climb. From this point of vantage a five-mile view of the conduit construction was visible.

"There!" he said, drawing rein and sweeping his hand up and down the valley. A little, amazed cry escaped her lips.

"Oh, it's wonderful, isn't it?"

"It is more than that, Miss Breen," he replied. "I don't know where there is a greater undertaking on the face of the earth than this one. Why, every time I ride here and look over that lengthening line of conduit, I feel like shouting to the very heavens. And to think that my city is doing it all!"

She turned curiously, moved by his tone. "You—you're a Los Angeles man?"

"To the core!" he answered. "Do you blame me for being proud? How many cities would dare even to dream of such a marvelous waterway? Oh, out here in the West, Miss Breen, men are doing the impossible!" In a calmer voice, he added: "This will be the longest aqueduct in the world—two hundred and fifty miles. Think of it! It will carry ten times as much water as all the aqueducts of Rome combined."

The girl did not answer, but her gaze was riveted upon the winding, glistening length of concrete far below.

"We're bringing the snow waters of the great Sierra Nevada Mountains across the Mohave Desert," he continued, "across the deep cañons, through many tunnels, and finally beneath the Sierra Madre range. And a city of three hundred thousand people voted a bond issue of twenty-five millions to accomplish this feat of daring."

"It must be a great satisfaction to a man to know that his brain and his hands are helping this dream of a city to become a reality," Miss Breen remarked, after a pause.

"Yes," said Nash. "We forget it is work. Wasn't it Kipling who said the highest pleasure that could come to a man was in the realization of a task well done?"

"'Each for the joy of the working,'" the girl quoted softly. "I think that's the verse."

For a little time they were silent, wrapped in their own thoughts. The girl was idly fingering her pony's mane; Nash was watching the white plumes of steam that arose from the big dredges, far in the distance. Then he swept his eyes to an opposite part of the valley.

"Over there," he said quietly, but with a touch of pride, "I'm starting a 'coyote.'"

The girl looked to where his finger pointed. She could barely make out a black hole a few yards below the summit of a hill.

"What's that?" she asked.

"A coyote is the name we use for that little tunnel. You can barely make out the mouth of it from here. We've got to level off the top of that hill. To accomplish it, we send in a drift; then, at the end of it, we hollow out a big chamber. This is filled with dynamite—a half a hundred boxes probably. Wires are laid from it across the valley and to the top of another hill. At the proper time, an electric battery is attached to the wires, a button is pressed—and bang! The top of the hill goes up in the air."

"Oh!" she exclaimed, gripping her hands. "It must be a wonderful sight. May I watch it?"

"It won't be ready for another week yet," he answered. "But when we touch off the battery you'll see the prettiest exhibition of fireworks this side of Manhattan Beach."

In a little while they rode down the slope once more and along the busy line of operations. He explained everything to her, in the simplest terms; she appeared deeply interested, and asked a hundred questions, some of which puzzled Nash, not because of their difficulty, but rather because they were so unexpected. It seemed strange to him that a girl like Miss Breen, apparently in this part of the country for health and recreation, should manifest such a keen desire for technical knowledge.

She betrayed immediate interest in the humanlike electric shovels, and at the grinding, growling, dust-hidden cement mixers, and at the spiderlike derricks that picked up tons of steel with the ease of a man lifting a sheet of paper.

Finally he took her to where the first siphon was being erected.

"You see," he explained patiently, "when we come to a valley, or to any depression, we're compelled to use these immense steel mains. Through them the water is shot down one side and up the other. This one building is ten feet in diameter. In New York, if you remember, there is a siphon bored through solid granite, running beneath the Hudson River, and bringing water from the Catskill Aqueduct. With the exception of a small length of pressure pipe in use at Niagara Falls, our siphons are the largest and longest in the world."

"I should think the force of the water would soon burst even the best of steel," she announced suddenly.

"It would," Nash replied, smiling at her remark. "Water will break steel like an eggshell, unless, of course, the steel is of a certain thickness and tensile strength."

Miss Breen went over and looked at a huge section of steel pipe which was almost ready to be riveted in place.

"It doesn't look very strong," she said.

Nash laughed. "The aqueduct engineer spent many months figuring out the right thickness. Specifications to the thousandth of an inch are given."

"And do you order the steel?" she asked.

He nodded. "That is one of the easy jobs," he said. "'Most anybody can follow printed specifications."

It was growing darker steadily. They had been so interested that the time had been forgotten; turning from their observations, they saw that the men had deserted the conduit work, and that all the big machines had stopped.

"How quiet it is!" Miss Breen said, as they walked back to where the ponies were hitched.

"I'll ride with you as far as the high trail," Nash volunteered, drawing out his watch, and surprised that the hands marked six o'clock. "Are you afraid to go on to the ranch alone?"

"Of course not. I haven't been afraid since I left the East. Somehow, one forgets there is such a word out here."

As he swung into his saddle, his coat flew up a little, and disclosed a weapon in his hip pocket.

"A revolver!" she exclaimed. "Why, what are you afraid of, Mr. Nash?"

"It isn't that I'm afraid," Nash told her gravely; "but in an argument, the man with a gun generally wins out."

"I suppose, being a Californian, you're a good shot?" Miss Breen said. "I suppose it comes natural, doesn't it?"

Nash shook his head and smiled into her anxious face.

"What makes you think that? All Easterners think the same. They want to believe that every man between here and the Colorado line carries a six-shooter or two. Nothing could be more absurd. The real gunman is found in the big cities. Why, I'll wager there are more men in New York City to-day carrying guns than in the whole State of California."

"Well," she returned, "I always imagined because one was in the West that——" She stopped suddenly. "Look there! A snake!"

Nash jerked the gun from his pocket, aimed it swiftly, and tightened his finger upon the trigger. The hammer fell in obedience to the pressure on the trigger, but only a hollow click resulted.

"Jove!" he exclaimed, realizing the truth instantly. "I used this revolver last night, and forgot to load it again."

"An unloaded gun isn't of much use, is it?" Miss Breen said, laughing with him, and watching the snake crawl safely away.

"On the contrary," Nash responded, "it is."

She frowned. "But how? Why, the other man could——"

"Could, but wouldn't," Nash interrupted. "It's the gun he's afraid of, not the bullet. And being gun-shy is about the commonest of human traits. As a general rule, you'll find it is the Eastern man who is most likely to pack around a gun. He considers it a necessary part of his Western equipment—the same as fringed gloves, chaps, knotted bandannas, and jingling spurs."

She did not answer him immediately, and they rode on in the silence. The twilight still lasted; an awesome hush brooded over the purpling hills. The hard outlines of the slim pines and the gaunt ridges of rock softened in the tender light. The air, sweet with the fragrance of wild flowers, tempered by the banks of snow on the higher ranges, swept to the faces of the riders.

"What is that?" Miss Breen asked abruptly, pointing below, to where a black line wound along the foot of the cliff.

"That is part of our water main," Nash responded, following the direction of her finger. "It is piped from camp to camp. A half mile on down the line is where——"

He stopped so unexpectedly that the girl bent forward in her saddle and peered into his face. Nash had caught sight of a dark form slipping along the pipe line. The outrage of the previous night was instantly recalled to his mind.

He dropped from his saddle. "You'd better remain right where you are, Miss Breen."

Luckily they had stopped well within the shadow of a cliff. The man below them came on cautiously, unable to distinguish the two who waited on the trail.

Miss Breen had slipped from her saddle and had joined Nash. Both were crouching behind a jagged point of rock.

Nash's eager, searching eyes had discovered something that fairly made his pulses race. The advancing man was carrying a long-handled hammer over his shoulder.

"What—what is it?" the girl stammered, awed by the silence.

"You'd better not stay here," Nash told her again.

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to capture this man," he declared. "He may be armed. You had better get back of——"

The man was so near now that Nash could distinguish the wide-brimmed sombrero and the glistening silver ornaments on the band. At the moment his eyes gathered in these details, he was surprised by a quick, choking cry that fell from Miss Breen's lips.

The advancing man must have heard, for he stopped, rigid as a statue. His face, protected by the big hat, was shrouded in shadow.

Although mystified at the girl's action, Nash knew no time was to be wasted. He jerked out his gun, and stepped from the shadow.

"Hands up, you!" he exclaimed grimly.

The man reeled back. Nash spoke again sharply. The arms shot skyward, the heavy hammer crashing to the rocks behind him.

"Keep them there," cautioned Nash. "Now, walk forward! Careful! No tricks, or I'll——" He moved his revolver suggestively.

The man came forward slowly, step by step. Then, just as his features were beginning to grow distinct, Miss Breen lifted a shrill, frightened voice:

"Run, run! His gun isn't loaded!"

In a flash, hardly before Nash could realize what had been said, the man dropped his arms, vaulted the line of pipe, and was instantly swallowed by the shadows.

TO BE CONTINUED.

BREATHING THROUGH THE NOSE

It is all important, in order to preserve the system from shock and the danger of contamination by foreign substances, that before the air enters the lungs it should be made as nearly as possible of the same temperature as the blood, and should be deprived of all particles of dust, which might be a hindrance to the bodily functions.

The entire course of the tortuous nasal canal is lined with mucous membrane, and this membrane is of a highly vascular structure. That is to say, the whole tissue is flushed with blood by a perfect network of vessels, over which the air we breathe passes, and from which it borrows the requisite heat. The mucus which is secreted by the membranes is also advantageous in rendering the atmosphere suitably moist.

In the light of these considerations, the difference between air breathed in through the nose and that taken in by the mouth becomes at once apparent. In the first case it is gently drawn in through the winding canals, and is tempered and purified on the way, while the air which reaches the lungs by way of the mouth comes upon them all at once, and is identical in nature with the surrounding atmosphere, whether that be warm or cold, dry or moist, full of dust or free from it.

Of no less importance than the benefits accruing to the whole system from properly breathing through the nose are those which result to the nasal membranes themselves. In the process of imparting heat and moisture to the air as it passes over them, the tissues are prevented from accumulating an oversupply of mucus, and any excess by blood pressure in the parts is relieved by the contact of the cold air which is constantly breathed in. One investigator has even gone so far as to assert that many forms of colds may be greatly benefited by a correct breathing exercise taken every few hours.

However that may be, it is certain that the disadvantages of mouth breathing are too numerous and glaring to be lightly passed over.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Never Rode on Railroad Train.

Joseph McGinnis, aged eighty, is dead, in Findlay, Ohio. It is said that he had only been in three towns during his lifetime, and that he had never ridden on a railway train.

Ban on One Carnival Sport.

Coney Island and other amusement places of New York State will have to struggle along this summer with "red-hots" and scenic railways and other athletic diversions without the aid of that soothing exercise of hitting with a baseball the head of an "Ethopian" as it protrudes from a hole in the canvas sheet and win a cigar. This is the depressing news which comes from Albany, N. Y., where a fussy legislature is interfering with the cheap and simple pleasures of the poor.

The bill, if passed, prohibits, on pain of fines ranging from $100 to $500, the earning of an honest though hazardous living by exposing the skull to the aim of snipers at Coney. Many persons who have no more profitable use for their heads will join the army of the unemployed, and the millions which throng Coney each week will have to content their violent natures by throwing baseballs at wooden heads instead of at the "African brother."

Big Steer Hurled from Train.

A Northwestern east-bound fast fruit and stock train, while running at a terrific speed, lost a big steer between Logan and Woodbine, Iowa, when the side door of the car became unfastened.

The steer, after performing a series of acrobatic stunts, picked himself up minus one horn, and walked to the F. C. Hodges yard on the Plumer farm. Railroad men say that the accident is without a parallel. The snow drifts along the track may account for the steer escaping fatal injury.

Beware of Food "Jag."

"Many popular artificial foods, which people imagine be good food in concentrated form, contain more alcohol than sherry wine, and will cause intoxication if enough is taken," said Doctor Franklin W. White, of Boston, Mass., in speaking on "Food in Health and Disease" at the Harvard Medical School.

Comparing the relative value of foods, according to the "glass-of-milk" and "bread-and-butter" standards, Doctor White asserted that a glass of milk was equal in food value to twenty glasses of soup or broth, and that a small slice of bread and butter equaled a large plate of beans or a dozen oysters. He emphasized the nutritive value of olive oil, a spoonful of which, he said, equaled in value a glass of milk.

"A lot of money is spent for flavor instead of for real food value," Doctor White said.

Fed Hens Auto Grease.

As hen food and an egg producer, automobile grease is now more popular in Brielle, N. J., than corn. Ralph T. Pearce, an engineer, made the discovery.

Recently one of his hens discovered a quantity of grease that had been spilled near the yard. In his capacity as bookkeeper to the bird, Pearce found that her productivity increased suddenly and remained at the new high level. Investigation gave him an idea. Now all his hens have a grease course in their menu.

The engineer says that not only do his birds lay better, but their new diet costs less than recognized varieties of hen food.

Heiress Scorns High Life.

Miss Lillian G. Carter, of Atlanta, Ga., who inherited $2,000,000 from her father, Josiah Carter, still declares that she will devote her life to settlement work. She does not care to be a social butterfly, she says.

Close Call for Aged Woman.

When Mrs. Marcus W. Church, seventy-one years old, of Wheeling, W. Va., was overcome by a paralytic stroke, a maid sent at once for Mrs. Church's son, Frank Church, who, on reaching home, thought his mother was dead. He called an undertaker, who arrived two hours later.

When the undertaker began preparations to embalm her, Mrs. Church sat up, rubbed her eyes, and asked: "What's the matter here?" A few minutes later she was able to be about the house, and in the evening she partook of her dinner as usual.

"Ferocious" Bear is Captured.

The bear that has been bothering people around Poland, Ohio, has been caught. Like an ordinary criminal, the animal was run down by a posse.

A crowd of men and boys tracked the animal to a hiding place in a thicket, and then "rushed" the place in a body. They found bruin in the spot, but he didn't want to fight. On the contrary, he seemed glad to see the crowd, and wanted to play. It was then found that he wore a muzzle, and was hungry.

The bear hunters were at a loss to know what to do with their catch until a gypsy appeared and claimed bruin as his own property.

Regains Voice Calling Cat.

Mrs. Grace Lambert, of Pinewood Avenue, Toledo, Ohio, was able, the other day, to use her voice for the first time since March 4, 1914, when she lost her speech following a long attack of bronchial pneumonia. Mrs. Lambert's voice suddenly returned when she called "Pete," the family cat, to breakfast.

When Ballet Skirts Grew Short.

In the earlier days of the ballet the dancers were dressed in the elaborate and fulsome costume of the period—the women in hooped petticoats falling to the ankle, with their powdered hair piled up a foot or more upon their heads, the men in long-skirted coats, set out from their hips with padding.

So long as this costume was worn, the dance was necessarily confined almost entirely to the dignified and gliding movements of the minuet. It permitted none of the

airy and intricate steps which are peculiar to the technic of the ballet proper.

Noverre, the eighteenth-century maitre de ballet, who is chiefly responsible for giving the ballet its present form, wrote as follows: "I wish to reduce by three-quarters the ridiculous paniers of our danseuses. They are opposed equally to the freedom, the quickness, and the prompt and animated action of the dance."

Mlle. de Camargo, the famous dancer, started the innovation in dress. She was the first to execute the entre chat, a light and brilliant step, during the performance of which the dancer rapidly crosses the feet while in mid-air. In her dances, therefore, she took the precaution of wearing the caleçon, from which the tight-fitting fleshing of the ballet dancer was subsequently evolved.

Two National Forest Blazes.

There is the possibility of a dangerous spring and summer fire season in the national forests in the West, as presaged by reports that two forest fires occurred in January. Moreover, the snowfall in much of the Rocky Mountain region and in the foothills has been much below normal.

January fires are almost unheard of in the national forests, and the snow reports are regarded as especially significant, as they indicate that, unless the deficiency is made up, the forests will be dry earlier in the spring than usual, with a consequent increase of the fire menace.

The fires occurred in the Pike forest, in Colorado, and the Black Hills forest, in South Dakota, the latter believed to have been of incendiary origin, according to the district forester at Denver. About seventy-five acres were burned over, all told. They were the only national forest fires reported for January.

The district forester at Ogden, Utah, in charge of the national forests in Nevada, Utah, and southern Idaho, reported that the snow in this region also is far below normal.

Two Beds for Eighteen.

A dapper young man breezed into the Teneyck Hotel, at Albany, N. Y., and said to "Doc" Benedict, its assistant manager:

"I want to engage two double rooms with bath."

"For how many persons?" asked Benedict.

"Well," explained the young man, "twelve men are to occupy one room, and six women the other. I want a double bed in each room."

"This hotel won't rent one room for twelve men or even for six women," said Benedict.

"If I were to tell you," pleaded the young man, "that I am the advance agent for a lilliputian show, and that none of the twelve men or six women weighs more than thirty-five pounds, would you rent the rooms?"

"Oh, that's different," said Benedict, and he switched the register around for the advance agent to sign.

Thief Returns Santa Claus Picture.

"Golly," the famous pickaninny Christmas painting by Angus Peter McDonall, has come back to the Santa Claus Association, in New York.

No one knows who stole it last December, and no one knows who left it on the twelfth floor of 347 Fifth Avenue. Yet it was returned by a friend of "The Meanest Thief" who stole it. With the painting he left a letter explaining that conscience and inability to pawn the work of art had influenced him to bring it back.

A man with three days' stubble on his face and poorly dressed placed a letter and package in the hands of one of the officials at the headquarters of the association. He disappeared down the elevator before any one could learn his identity. The letter read:

"Here is the oil painting I stole from you last December. I was hungry and had no place to sleep when I took it. I did not know what it was or what it was for when I stole it. If I had known that it was used to cheer up the kiddies for Christmas I would never have stolen it.

"I tried to pawn it two times, but couldn't. The first pawnbroker I offered it to showed me the name of the association on it. This was the first time I found out who owned it. I tried to wash off the name, but couldn't do so. The second pawnbroker also refused to take it.

"I have kept it with me ever since. I have often thought of how happy I was after Santa had been to my house when I was a boy. My mind bothered me so much that I could not sleep at times, and I decided to send it back by a friend of mine. I would have carried it back myself, but I was afraid of being recognized by some one in your office. THE MEANEST THIEF."

When the officials recovered from their amazement they sent a telegram to Mr. McDonall at his home, in Westport, Conn., notifying him of the return of his painting.

Golly shows a little pickaninny standing in front of a fireplace in his mother's cabin on Christmas morning. On the hearth is a Christmas tree, with lighted candles and packages of candy, and a few toys are scattered over the floor. Youthful happiness spreads over the child's face as he gazes on the bounty of St. Nicholas.

Wireless Machine is Carried on an Auto.

What is probably the first automobile wireless apparatus in the country belongs to O. E. Ruckgaber, Ithaca, N. Y., a senior in the College of Civil Engineering at Cornell University.

Ruckgaber is already sending wireless messages from his car for a distance of about ten miles when the atmospheric conditions are good, and he hopes to send messages for much longer distance in a short time. Ruckgaber attached the wireless to the car two weeks ago. At first he sent messages but short distances to his fraternity house, but he has improved the machine recently.

All that can be seen of the apparatus are two wires running from the top of the car and meeting at the outer point of the engine hood. The sending and receiving apparatus is placed on one of the seats.

To Make Lard Out of Corn Oil.

After determining that corn oil is an economic substitute for olive oil, Dean L. E. Sayre, of the Kansas University School of Pharmacy, is experimenting to determine whether it is a satisfactory substitute for lard. Some of the liquid oil, which is heavy and brown, has been hydrogenated. In this condition it appears white and has about the consistency of cocoa butter, and melts at the temperature of beeswax.

Dean Sayre has been experimenting with corn oil for more than a year. He found that it makes a very good

substitute for olive oil in salad dressings, and believes that the hydrogenated oil can be used in place of lard. The patented frying mediums are hydrogenated cotton-seed oil.

Corn oil is extracted from the soft white center of the corn, where the life spark dwells. It is a by-product of the manufacture of starch, glucose, and the better grades of corn meal.

Giant Reptile Seven Million Years Old.

Between seven and ten million years ago, in what is known as the Jurassic Age, there lived a group of giant reptiles called Dinosaurs, one family of which, the Stegosauridæ, or plated lizards, is perhaps the most fantastic and curious in all natural history. The most perfect and complete fossilized skeleton of the genus Stegosaurus, a smaller branch of this remarkable family group, is on exhibition in the new building of the United States National Museum, at Washington, just as it was found and dug out of the sandstone rock. Near at hand is a natural size and very lifelike restoration in papier-mâché so weird and monstrous in appearance as to give one the horrors.

Back in the very early days of the world, this armor-plated, lizardlike monster dwelt in the western part of the United States in what is now the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, although at that time the mountains did not exist.

He roamed about in the marsh and swamp lands of that region, feeding on the tropical grasses and plants, the fossil remains of which are found buried with his skeleton. The specimen mentioned above comes from Quarry No. 1, in Fremont County, near Cañon City, Col., where it was found by Mr. M. P. Felch in 1885. Brief articles concerning it were written from time to time, but it was not assembled and mounted until two years ago, and never completely described until recently.

With the exception of the removal of some of the sandstone which surrounds this valuable specimen, it has been left in the position in which it was discovered so that the relation of the various bones and skin armor may be seen and studied by scientists. In order that the lower side of the skeleton and the back plates may be seen, two mirrors have been placed beneath it in such a manner as to reflect the exact structure and location of the various bones.

The undisturbed position of the bones and the surrounding sandstone indicates that this monster died in the water, or on the bank of a stream, and from some natural cause. It is possible that the carcass floated down the stream, as the arrangement of the different bones and spine plates indicates a gradual washing and tipping over, rather than the crushing action of a heavy force. The skeleton is quite complete and lies partly on its side and back, with nearly all the bones in their relative positions, rendering it of infinite value to scientists for study and as a reference type.

In life this peculiar reptile, of such gigantic proportions, must have presented a forbidding appearance; it measures about nineteen feet in length, was evidently more than eleven feet in height at the hips, and was covered with a very tough and horny scalelike skin, studded here and there with bony buttons or knobs of armor. Along its back were arranged great sharp-edged plates, set alternately and projecting upward like the teeth of a huge saw. This odd armor plate extended from the small, wedge-shaped reptilian head all the way back and well down the tapering, lizardlike tail, which was tipped with four long, sharp spines. Its legs were not unlike those of a lizard or other reptile, except that the forelegs were rather short and much weaker than the hind ones, an indication that the great animal could sit up like a kangaroo, and was perhaps descended from a bipedal ancestor.

From a study of its teeth it has been determined that this prehistoric beast was a plant eater, as is suggested by its habitat. Further investigation of its head, which is so small as to be quite out of proportion to its massive body, reveals the fact that it had scarcely any brain. Although the body of the Stegosaur is supposed to have weighed more than that of an elephant, the brain of the latter is fifty times as heavy, which fact appears an excuse for the immense amount of defensive armor with which it was equipped, making it practically impregnable as far as its enemies were concerned, provided it had any. Its bones alone weigh nearly a ton, and it has been estimated that in life the Stegosaur weighed between seven and ten tons.

Panama-Pacific Fair is Now Open.

The greatest day in California's history has been recorded. Responding to the touch of President Wilson's fingers on a telegraph key, the great Panama-Pacific International Exposition was formally opened, and 400,000 visitors joined in the cheering, the singing, and the first tours of inspection of the stupendous show as seen in full running order.

It came through flawlessly. There was no hitch in the ceremonies. From the dawn, when San Francisco was awakened by a volume and variety of noise such as never was imagined before, until late in the evening, when the heavens were lit with the great play of lights from the exposition's wizards of illumination, the program of the opening day was carried out as it was planned in the minds of the fair's builders.

Shortly before noon a great procession of citizens, headed by the mayor, marched onto the grounds. Charles C. Moore, president of the Exposition Company, informed President Wilson by direct transcontinental telephone that his wireless flash had been received, and the president conveyed his greetings and good wishes. Thus the two latest methods of long-distance communication vivified the fair opening. Ceremonies of dedication and acceptance as brief as possible inaugurated the exposition.

Forty-five foreign nations, forty-three States, and three Territories are represented at the exposition.

"To-day is the triumph," said Governor Johnson, speaking for the State. "It is the triumph of San Francisco that nine years ago was a city that lay in ruins."

Secretary Lane was present as the personal representative of President Wilson. He brought greetings of the president to the people of California and to the exposition management.

Mr. Lane, after expressing the greetings of President Wilson, said that he expected that Mr. Wilson would be in San Francisco within a month. "I come as a token bearer to speak a feeble foreword to the rich volume of his admiration for your courage, your enterprise, and your genius," he said.

The first day's attendance at the exposition exceeded the records of all previous great American expositions

on their opening day. Two hours after the gates had opened to admit the first person, there had been 180,000 admissions to the grounds, and there remained great crowds in the lines to pass through the turnstiles. On the first day of the Chicago World's Fair there were 137,557 admission, and at St. Louis, in 1904, there were 178,453 admissions on the opening day.

The telegraph key touched by President Wilson was studded with gold nuggets. It was the same key that President Taft used to open the Alaska-Yukon Exposition. The ceremony was held in the East Room of the White House.

As seen from the hills of San Francisco, the exposition presents a great parti-colored area, perhaps best described as resembling a giant Persian rug of soft, melting tones. The roofs of the palaces are a reddish pink, the color of Spanish tile; the domes are green, and gold and blue are set within the recesses of the towers. The general color plan is a faint ivory, the color of travertine stone.

It was a new field, this painting an entire city with the colors of the rainbow. Expositions of the past had been "White Cities," with the exception of slight uses of color in the last two, but the directors of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition wanted a "Rainbow City," whose colors would provide a splendid feature.

Cost of Panama-Pacific Exposition, $50,000,000.

Cost of World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893, $33,000,000.

Attendance on opening day of San Francisco Fair, nearly 400,000.

Largest exhibit, United States Steel Co. display, weight, 1,500 tons.

Smallest exhibit, three grains of radium, weight, one-sixtieth of troy ounce.

Most unique display, one hundred tons of carved woodwork and hand-made wares sent by China.

Bits of Interesting Information.

Since natural gas was discovered in Cleveland several months ago, more than one hundred successful wells have been sunk within the city limits.

A new dustpan that a woman has patented has a handle on one side and in front a guard plate, over which dust is brushed into a pocket.

Argentina is one of the few important countries in which no coal is mined.

Six thousand an hour is the speed of a new machine for sealing and stamping letters.

A steering wheel instead of the familiar handle bars features a new type of bicycle.

Switzerland uses a greater proportion of its available water power than any other country.

A Spanish syndicate is considering building a railroad across northern Africa, 1,864 miles long.

For motorists there has been invented a cloth-lined rubber pail that folds flat when not in use.

Rubbing with unsalted butter, followed by bleaching in the sun, will cleanse ivory ornaments.

Scientists have estimated that more than fifteen per cent of the earth's crust is composed of aluminium.

To prevent waste of tooth powder or paste is the purpose of a new cup to hold a small amount, into which a brush may be rubbed.

Explosions of a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases drive the engines in a new French submarine boat.

The newest foot rest for a bootblack's stand is equipped with clamps to hold a patron's shoe stationary.

Lemon juice in water is an excellent tooth wash, as it not only removes tartar but sweetens the breath.

Of French invention is a hammock that can be converted into a comfortable seat that holds a person erect.

Self-propelled steam machinery for clearing land of stumps after lumbering operations has been invented.

Peru is making its own Portland cement, which heretofore it has imported from Europe and the United States.

A Missouri inventor's comb is made of metal and mounted on a block that will retain heat a considerable time.

For fumigating books in public libraries there has been invented an airtight case, in which they can be subjected to sulphur fumes.

A new cabinet for raising bread dough is provided with the desired temperature by heating a stone and placing it in the bottom.

A nonsinkable lifeboat of German invention is equipped with doors that automatically close upon its occupants should it upset.

In Japan recently there was completed a railroad bridge nearly seven miles long, built of native materials at a cost of $375,000.

Oil Tanker Rides a Sea of Flames.

The tale of an oil tanker laden with benzine, which rode through a sea of fire and made the Azores by dead reckoning, was told by Captain Dekker, master of the Holland-American freighter *Zaandyk*, upon landing in New York. He got the story second hand at Horta, but he thought it was true and even more thrilling than the account related to him.

He heard also that one of the tanker's lifeboats, containing the chief officer and seven men, had been blown away and was never seen again.

Any man who would take a cargo of benzine from the west coast of South America to London in the winter, and buck through the worst weather of the year, he thought, was capable of fighting his way through a sea of fire.

When the *Zaandyk* came in from Rotterdam, Captain Dekker was asked if he had seen any mines in the North Sea. No, he hadn't seen any mines, and he had not been molested by any craft of the warring nations.

Yes, he was late, but that was the weather. Fighting westerly gales and head seas that kept his bow awash and his propellers clear too often to be comfortable, ate up his coal before he was halfway across, and he had to run into the Azores.

It was pretty dirty weather, but he didn't mind that. He didn't carry a benzine cargo, like the other fellow, and what happned to the other fellow was perhaps worth telling.

The other fellow was Captain Bugge, the mighty master of the Norwegian tanker *La Habra*, who had tried conclusions with the benzine cargo from the west coast. He had had a fire on board that cleaned up his charts, sextants, compasses, and chronometers, and let it go at that.

Captain Dekker thought it was like the prank of a mean sailorman who would catch a shark, chop off his tail, and then turn him adrift, to die or be devoured alive by its mates.

"I didn't get over to see the tanker," said Captain

Dekker, "but she was making repairs when we put into Horta. Her experience was known all over the Azores."

According to what he had learned about her, *La Habra* left Talara Bay, passed through the Panama Canal, and steamed east from Colon. Gales from the southwest and northwest did not bother her much, but when she got within about 400 miles southeast of the Azores the wind shifted to northeast, and she got a pounding which almost foundered her.

Several times she nearly went over on her beam ends, and the treacherous fluid cargo was badly shaken. The engine and fire-room crews feared that at any minute a tank compartment might break and drive a flood of benzine into the fires. It was sure death for all of them if this happened, and they hadn't much faith in the security of any tank in weather such as they were then running through.

While this northeaster was doing its worst, a terrific explosion occurred aft of the house. It is not known whether the men below stuck to their posts, but those on deck sought safety, some huddling together on the bow and others at the stern.

Now, Captain Bugge had carried oil before. He knew his ship and was ready to save his men.

"There isn't any use of you fellows getting away up aft and forrid there," the skipper shouted, "because if there's another blow-up, you'll have nothing but the sea."

He knew what was going to happen if the benzine became ignited.

The lifeboats, tackle, and falls would go up like chaff, and all hands would have the choice of drowning or sticking to a red-hot tanker.

Calling his men from their perches, Captain Bugge ordered all lifeboats dropped over the side. Although another explosion was expected momentarily, the sailormen obeyed orders. The chief officer and five men got into the after-starboard lifeboat, and, making it fast, played out their line until they drifted astern 100 yards. With this boat out of the way, the men were prepared to jump and make for it if the fire got to the benzine. Captain Bugge stuck to the bridge until a great wall of water heeled the vessel over and ripped open a tank.

Benzine mixed with the spindrift swashed into the flames and drove a liquid blaze over the house. The bridge and chart room were soon stripped of everything in them not made of metal, and the compass, falling from its supports, rolled into the sea. Presently the terrific heat burst another tank and sprayed the sea with fire.

The water-soaked line to the trailing lifeboat astern soon crumpled into ashes under the terrific fire the northeaster blew upon it, and, with its occupants, the boat bounded on to the southwest. It was never seen again. The other boats, charred and battered, were useless.

When hope had been abandoned, a great wave swept *La Habra* from stem to stern, and when it passed the flames were gone. The fire was out for good.

Throughout the battle with fire and storm no benzine got into the fire room. The broken tanks were now burned out and the tanker was at least safe from fire.

Although badly battered by the storm, the tanker's engines were not damaged, and under her own steam she started on her course to the northeast.

Captain Bugge had nothing to guide him but the sun. His bridge compass was gone and the one astern made useless by the fire. He said he had an idea where the Azores might be, and finally got into Horta safely.

Captain Dekker, of the *Zaandyk*, said he believed that the Norwegian master would eventually get to London with the remainder of his benzine cargo.

Ore-steal Stories of the Early Days.

Stories of famous steals put across when ore was sampled in the old-fashioned way are being retold by old-time miners of Denver, Col. Tales of the stirring days when Leadville was a city of tents and Colorado miners, hot-blooded young fellows who came West to dig gold from the earth or die, are being circulated around hotel lobbies and office buildings of Denver, just as they went the rounds of Colorado mining camps forty years ago.

The story of the $41,000 difference between the Cresson mine people and their smelting company over the assaying of samples taken from the wonderful golden chamber discovered in the great strike in their Cripple Creek property has quickened the memories of the old miners and brought to their recollection tales of the good old days, when they wielded the pick and shovel.

"Yes, I suppose smelting companies were cheated out of hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of dollars by crooked sampling deals in the old days," said one old-time prospector. "And, on the other hand, certain practices of theirs shortened up the profits of the miners considerably, so I guess it was about an even break.

"You see, the old-fashioned sampling of ore was done this way: The ore haulers drove across the hills from the mines to the smelter, hauling the ore in great, heavy wagons. At the smelter the custom was to sample ten to one-hundred-ton lots of the ore. The wagons would drive up to the smelter, and the husky hauler would throw one shovelful into the sample bin, then three shovelfuls into the general bin, in succession, until the load was exhausted.

"Some of the smelting companies beat the miners out of a good deal of money by always turning in an assay report a little below that of the miner. Then they'd offer to split the difference. Supposing the miner split with the company on a two-ounce difference in silver smelting; that would make one hundred ounces to the hundred ton. With silver at $1.19 an ounce, which it sold for in the old days, that made $120 lost to the miner with the smelting of every hundred-ton lot, the sum being put into the pocket of the smelter owners.

"One way some of the miners got it back on the smelting companies was in the loading of their sample wagons. They would put a layer of the highest-grade ore procurable in the bottom of the wagons. Then they'd fill them up with lower-grade ore. When the hauler bent his broad back over the shovel at the smelter he had a distinct understanding with his employer that he was to shovel from the bottom of the wagon into the sampling bin and from the top into the general bin.

"Old One-eyed Ike, of Leadville, pulled a very neat trick on a smelter company. Ike made a strike in his silver mine. A good deal of it was just a fair grade of ore—nothing wonderful. But Ike wanted to get rich quick. So he fixed up a rubber bulb, which he fastened under his arm with a long tube running under his coat sleeve to his left hand.

"The bulb was full of chloride of silver. When the sample would get down small, Ike would press his arm

on the bulb and add a good deal of weight to the sample with the silver that would rush out of the tube. He got by with this trick for months. But finally the smelter people began to think that Ike's samples were running pretty high. So they began to watch him. They couldn't find a thing wrong, except that he wore his old blue coat right through the hottest days.

"Ike was mopping the sweat from his brow with his old red bandanna one sultry August noon, when a bee lit on his left hand and crawled up his sleeve. An expression of agony stole into Ike's one bleary eye. He squeeze the bee through his coat sleeve, but it only stung harder.

"I couldn't tell you what he said. Nobody but an old-time miner would be qualified to pass on Ike's language. Finally he could stand the torment of that stinging bee no longer. He tore off his coat, revealing the tube, and ran for the creek, tearing his shirt to ribbons on the low-hanging branches of the pines and spruces. The smelter man noticed the tube when Ike took off his coat, and his little game was over. But he had got away with $50,000 or $100,000, which the smelter people were never able to get back."

Brace of Big Birds are Slain.

C. H. Lewis, a prominent merchant of Randolph, La., saw two large birds light in the mill pond here. Securing a gun, he succeeded in killing them. The birds are of an unknown kind, but they resemble huge white cranes. They measure over five feet from tip to tip, have web feet like a duck, and are almost snow white except a little dark blue on their backs.

A Notorious Bandit's End.

The body of Frank James, the former outlaw, who died on his farm near Excelsior Springs, Mo., has been cremated at St. Louis. The ashes have been returned to a safe-deposit vault in this city, in accordance with the last wish of James. The ex-bandit said he did not wish his grave to be a mecca for sightseers.

Whatever may have been the faults of Frank James, he kept his word and was a respected citizen when death summoned him. In the thirty years since he surrendered to the Governor of Missouri at Jefferson City, James clung to his determination to live an upright life. The latter part of his career furnished a good illustration of the doctrine that a man can quit if he wants to and stay quit if he wills to. James knew what a man could do if he only made up his mind to do it. That is the real moral of his story. Supporting himself and his family by honest work, he won a good place in public opinion and made friends wherever he went.

A writer, long a friend of the former bandit, visited James several years ago to get information to be used in a proposed book.

"I promised the governor, when I surrendered, that I would never write a book about myself or permit one to be written," said James. Though he was offered $10,000, he kept his promise, dying without having told the details of his seventeen years of wild life. It has been his wish to live down his former reputation, and he died with the satisfaction that he had done so.

James was seventy-one years old. Apoplexy caused his death; he had been ill for many months.

Fifty years ago, when the report spread in any one of the hundreds of small towns in the Middle West, and especially in that section of Missouri which borders on Kansas, that the James boys were coming, a reign of terror invariably resulted. Stores were closed, the townspeople armed themselves with the long rifles in vogue in that day, and a guard surrounded the local bank. Women and children were usually placed in cellars and under strong guard for safety. The word "James" was one with which to conjure terror, for the reputation of Jesse and Frank was known to every one, from the oldest inhabitant to the smallest barefooted boy.

Frank and his brother, Jesse James, joined Quantrell's Guerillas in the Civil War and took part in the sacking of Lawrence, Kan. Scores of persons were shot and killed at that time, and their relatives swore vengeance on every one who had a part in the raid. Jesse and Frank were singled out, and, as the latter often said in excuse for his action, were persecuted until they turned outlaws in order to gain a living.

Their first big robbery took place one year after the war, when, accompanied by a band of desperadoes, Frank and Jesse rode into Liberty, Mo., and surrounded the Commercial Bank. One bank defender was killed and $70,000 in cash was taken. The audacity of the crime caused widespread indignation, and a price was set upon the heads of the desperadoes.

After minor raids in southern Missouri, the James boys, as they became known, rode into Russellville, Ky., one morning in 1868. Their band did not wear masks; instead, they darkened their faces with berry stain. They shot up the town and took $17,000 from the local bank. A month or two later word was received in Gallatin, Mo., that Jesse and Frank were in the neighborhood. They were and soon were in Gallatin. Captain John W. Sheets, cashier of the bank, fired a fusillade at the band and instantly was shot down and killed.

Then followed a series of raids and train holdups which netted the band thousands of dollars and made their name a household word throughout the West.

Word was received by the State authorities in 1875 that Jesse and Frank were in the James homestead near Kearney, Mo. On the night of the twenty-fifth of that month a lighted bomb was thrown into the house, killing Archie James, the bandits' brother, and tearing off the arm of their mother.

"We weren't at home," Frank afterward said, "but we were in the neighborhood. We found out that the men throwing the bomb were making toward Kansas City, and we overtook them. 'What would you do if you saw the James boys?' I said to the leader. 'We'd shoot them,' he told me. 'Well, here we are; so shoot!' Jesse shouted. Not a one of them was left alive."

In 1882, after Jesse James had been shot and killed in his home in St. Joseph, Mo., by Bob Ford, also a bandit, for a reward of $30,000, Frank James surrendered in Jefferson City, Mo. He spent a year in jail awaiting trial. He finally was acquitted. He never was in the penitentiary and never was convicted of any of the charges against him.

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